

Great and Precious  
**P R O M I S E S,**

O R,

Some Sermons concerning the  
Promises, and the right application thereof:

Whereunto are added some other concerning  
the usefulness of Faith, in advancing San-  
ctification :

As also, three more concerning the Faith of  
Assurance.

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By Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*, late Minister  
of the Gospel in *Glasgow*.

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All being revised since his death by some  
Friends.

The last impression carefully corrected and  
amended.

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2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore these promises  
(dearly beloved) let us cleanse our selves from  
all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting  
holiness in the fear of God.*

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## To the Reader.

Christian Reader,

**A**lthough (upon some considerations) these following Sermons have been kept back till now, and have waited the vacancy of the Press from other things; yet was it at first intended (the connexion of the purposes so requiring) that they should have come forth as soon as some other of this precious Author, which we did formerly publish: And therefore in the Preface which we then prefixed, we did relate to both, and give the Reader such advertisement as we conceive necessary concerning the one, as well as the other: So that we have nothing to do at present, but to put this little piece into thy hands, commending it to thy serious thoughts, and the Lords blessing upon them. Neither shall we use many words to this purpose. Only we find some help is offered unto thee in three most weighty and concerning points of Christian Religion, 1. How by the lively exercise of Faith, thou may apply the great and precious Promises. 2. How by faith thou



## To the Reader.

*may advance the work of Sanctification. And 3. How thy faith may grow up unto assurance. Of all which we may truly say, that nothing can more seasonably take up the thoughts, nor bring more advantage to the souls of the Lords people in these times.*

*O how necessary is it in such troublesome days, to learn, how through Faith and Patience we may inherit the Promises: and now when our strong corruption hath (in a manner) necessitated the wise Physician to mix unto us so bitter a cup, and give so strong potion, in what a fainting and swooning condition must we be, if by the two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we receive not also the strong consolation. Again when profanity and ungodliness hath so abounded in these Nations, that from the top of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores. And when the corruption of the time, like the sons of Zerviah, are grown too strong even for the Davids who are amongst us; what should we study with*

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more earnestness then to purify our hearts by faith, & by having these promises, to cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh & spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord? 3. When the Lord hath removed us so far from peace, that the souls of many have even forgot prosperity & the multiplied changes & revolutions in our days, hath so clearly demonstrat the instability of all sublunary glory & so convincingly taught us, that this is not our rest, undoubtedly, it is time to look for a city that hath foundations, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, the subject then is useful.

As to the manner of handling it; it is true much accuracy & neatness, is not to be expected in any work of this nature, being only the hasty gleamings of a Church Writer, & as to liveliness & power, though it be as easie to draw a picture with the heat & motion of a living man, as to write or print, these lively motions of the spirit, which do often accompany the Lords Messengers in preaching, & in an eminent measure were also let out upon



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*this blessed Author; yet we suppose thou wilt find the matter most seriously & feelingly spoken unto, as from a heart which believed, & therefore spake: Yea, the conceptions & expressions favouring much of an exercised Spirit, not only much taken up in communion with God within it self, but even thirsting also & panting for the salvation of others; nay, (in some measure, traveling in birth til Christ might be formed in them. O that more of this holy zeal & fervency, might accompany this great measure of light & knowledge in the mysteries of the Gospel, that the Lord hath graciously bestowed both in Pastors & People in this generation, that once again we might see (as in the days of John Baptist) the Kingdom of Heaven suffering violence, & the violent taking it by force. And that the blessed Spirit by the same gracious operations, may so warm and enlarge thy soul in the use of this and all other means for thy eternal Salvation, is, and shall be the sincere desire of,*

Thy servants for Christs sake,

Robert Trail. John Stirling.

G R E A T

I  
Great and Precious

# PROMISES.

## SERMON I.

- 2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**M**ay we not truly say, that if ever the Christians who live in these days shall be advanced to stand within the holy place, and shall inherit everlasting life, all these that are now before his Throne, may lay aside their harps and give us leave to sing? will it not be a mystery, suppose ye, unto heavenly *Enoch* that spent so much of his time in communion and fellowship with God, when he shall behold such Christians within that everlasting rest, that have spent so little of their time in corresponding with God? will it not be a mystery unto believing *Abraham*, when he shall behold such misbelievers, such disputers of the Promises of God, advanced to reign with Christ? will it not be a mystery unto wrestling *Jacob*, when he shall behold these Christians once crowned with immortal glory, that did so little know what it was as Prince to wrestle with God, till they did prevail; Will it not be a wonder to patient *Job*, when he shall behold such impatient Christians as we have been, entring into that blessed place of repose? Will it not be a mystery unto holy *David*, when he shall behold such unmortified Christians entring within that City, into which no unclean thing doth enter?



ter? Will it not be a mystery unto tender *Josia*, to behold such Christians as we are, that have our hearts dying as a stone within us, entering into heaven? Will it not be a mystery, unto upright *Nathaniel*, to behold such hypocritical Christians, as the most part of us are, entering within the holy place, and to see those that have been cloathed with hypocrisie and guile, now cloathed with the robes of immortal Glory? And will it not be a mystery unto self-denied *Paul*, when he shall behold so proud and selfish Christians enter into heaven? Give me leave to say this, go where we will, we shall be marchless and singular; for if we shall go into eternity of pain, we shall be the greatest debtors unto the infinite justice of God, in regard of mercies we have received; and if we shall enter into eternity of joy, we shall be the greatest debtors unto the spotless grace of Christ, in regard of mercy we have abused. There shall be none in heaven like to us, and if we shall go to hell, there shall be few there that may be compared unto us. And let me but add thus further before I come to the words, go where we will we shall be out of doubt with our condition: within a short time a real Christian shall be exalted above the reach of his misbelieving, a hypocrite shall be depressed below the reach of his faith, and one that is grossly in nature, he shall be abased beyond the reach of his presumption: a Christian ere long shall misbelieve no more, a hypocrite ere long shall believe no more; and one that is grossly in nature shall ere long presume no more: there is no misbelief in heaven, and there is no faith nor presumption of well-being in hell. But to come to that which we intend to speak to, we told you when first we began our discourse upon that precious and exalting grace of Faith under a twofold notion and consideration. First, As it is justifying. And secondly, as it is sanctifying. For the first we resolv-

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ed to ~~peak~~ to it in a twofold consideration: First, As it closeth with Christ simply as the object upon which it resteth, and of this we have spoken from that place, 1 *John* 3.23. Secondly, As it closeth with Christ as held forth in the promises. And now being to speak of it in this consideration, we have made choise of this place, in which these things concerning the promises, shortly; 1. Ye have that fountain & spring from whence the promises do flow, holden forth in the first words of the verse, *whereby*, or (as the words may be more fitly rendered) *by whom* relating unto Jesus Christ, who is the original and spring of all Promises.

2. The properties of the promises, and these are,

1. The freedom of the promises, held forth in that word, *given*, whereby *are given*, which speaketh this, that the promises are free gifts, flowing only from good pleasure. 2. Their unchangeableness, and that is holden forth in the word, *Given*, the gifts and calling of God being without repentance. 3. That they are *exceeding great*, and the promises are called great, either in respect of that price that was laid down to purchase the promises; or they are called great in respect of the great things that are contained in them. 4. That they are *precious*; Now the promises are called precious, either in respect of their original, that they come from precious Christ; or else in respect of this, that they are the object (I mean the object *quo* or by which) of *precious* Faith, as it is called in the first verse of this Chapter, or else they are precious, because they are things that a Christian ought to put an high account upon. For the word that is rendered precious, may likewise be rendered honourable, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and honourable promises.

3. We have holden forth in the words the great advantages of the promises: *By them we are made partak-*



ers of the divine Nature. Now this is not to be understood of any essential conversion of our substance into the substance of God, but of a Christian having the divine virtues of Jesus Christ impressed upon his soul, and expressed in his life and conversation.

And there is this lastly, concerning the promises in the words, even the time when the promises are eminently accomplished; it is, *when we have escaped, or as the word is, when we have fled from the corruptions that are in the world through lust*; That is the time when a Christian meeteth with the accomplishment of the promise.

Now before we can speak to any of these, we must speak a little unto some things, as necessary to be known in order to the better understanding of all.

1. We shall not dwell long in pointing out unto you what is a promise, We conceive it is a glorious discovery of the good will of God towards sinners; and withal, a purpose and intendment, (and if we may say) an ingagement to bestow some spiritual or temporal good upon them, or to withhold some spiritual or temporal evil from them. And certain it is, that in this description of the promise, there is a divine harmony betwixt Mercy and Truth, betwixt Righteousness and Peace, they kiss one another. Neither shall we stand long to point out the distinction of the promises. 1. There are some promises that are conditional, and there are some promises that are absolute: absolute promises are these that have no condition annexed unto the performance of them; such a promise is that, that God will destroy the world no more by water, that is an absolute promise: such a promise was that of Gods sending his Son into the world, that was an absolute promise; and such is that promise of conversion, in giving of the heart of flesh, it is an absolute promise. As for the conditional promises, they are these that do

do require some condition to be performed by the Christian before the accomplishment of the promise, such as that promise of salvation is, requireth believing as going before it, *He that believeth shall be saved*: And pardon, it is promised unto a Christian upon repentance, and yet we confess that there is not a conditional promise that is in all the Covenant of grace, but it may be reduced into an absolute promise, in regard that the thing promised (in the conditional promise) is one absolute free gift, and the condition of the promise is another. 2. There are some promises that are temporal, and some that are spiritual; temporal promises are these, that promise some temporal thing unto a Christian; and spiritual promises are these, that promise the bestowing of something that is of everlasting concernment. 3. There are some promises that are not accomplished in this life, such as this, *That we shall see him as he is, and shall be made like unto him*: But for the promises of Faith and Justification, these are accomplished in this life. 4. There are some promises that are extraordinary, and there are some promises that are common: Extraordinary promises are these, that are given to some particular believers, as a singular privilege, such was the promise that was given to Abraham, in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed: and that promise that was given to Rebekah, that the elder should serve the younger: As for common promises, they are these, that every believer in Christ hath a right to make use of it.

Neither shall we stand long to point out, that it is the duty of a Christian to be much in the exercise of Faith upon the promises: it is clear from *Psa. 62. 8. Trust in him at all times, ye people*. And it is clear from the practice of that precious cloud of witnesses recorded of in *Heb. 11.* that spent their days in embracing



bracing of the promises. But, 7. We would have you consider, that it is more easie for a Christian believer to believe spiritual promises, then to believe temporal promises: it is easier to trust Christ for eternal salvation, then to trust him for our daily food, when we are reduced unto straits. And the grounds upon which we assert this, may be these; 1. Because it is hard for a Christian to believe that Christs death reacheth for the purchasing of temporal promises, which more easily he taketh up in spiritual promises: for a Christian can hardly believe that such a thing was in Christs intention, as to die for his dayly food, which is most certain, if we consider it as a special mercy. 2. In a Christians believing of spiritual promises, there is often some sense and reason that helpeth him to the exercise of faith, at least, they press not the contrary; but to believe a temporal promise when a Christian is reduced unto a strait, and that he can see no outgate present, sense and reason stands upon the top of his faith, and presseth him to despair; As for instance, when a Christian is living upon the top of a mountain, and knoweth not where to sup at night; to believe that there is a promise upon which he may rest, that he shall not want his food; but that if the Lord have service for him, he will provide, here he hath not only reason to dispute against it, but the strong pinching sense of hunger, both crying out, *How can bread be given in the wilderness?* 3. The temptations that assault a Christian, to misbelieve upon temporal promises, they are more subtile and more connatural to a Christian, then his temptations that assault him in resting upon the spiritual promises. When a Christian is in straits in the world, the temptations that hinder his exercise of faith, they are more consonant to flesh and blood; we are ready to yield to misbelief then, because we think it is rational and

and speaketh the truth: 4. A Christian is often so afrighted by his daily failings, or some particular more gross out-breakings in his life, that howbeit he may (through grace) be helped to believe that the Lord shall make out these promises which concern his eternal salvation, and so do him good in the latter end: yet he may be sadly ~~perplexed~~ <sup>perplexed</sup> and distrustfully, in making use of any particular temporary promise, for drawing forth any comfort or encouragement therefrom, as to his present exigent; because he knoweth that although the Lord doth forgive his peoples iniquities, yet may he take vengeance on their inventions, *Psa.* 99. 8. and therefore may punish his present failing with the like calamities as he hath done others.

5. There is also much of a natural and carnal self-love to a present life, remaining in the best, that we are many times worse to satisfy in our securities for the things of this life, then of that which is to come; and can more easily trust the Lord for our souls, then for our bodies; so that though his naked word will sometimes satisfy us for the one, yet it will not for the other. And the last ground of it may be a Christians unacquaintedness with that lot of exercising Faith upon temporal promises, there being many who think not that there is use for faith, except for Salvation and the things above, which maketh his faith upon these more difficult, then upon promises that are spiritual: And this may appear most clearly, in that we find men more easily bear their spiritual wants (even a Christian that is most exercised) then they bear their temporal wants: and more corruption and impatience doth arise from temporal want, then from spiritual want.

2. Consider, that all a Christians duties are turned over into promises: there is not a duty that is required of a Christian, but it is converted into a promise.

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Is not Faith a duty, in 1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his commandment that ye should believe?* And is not that turned over into a promise, in Jer. 3. 16. *Thou shalt call me thy Father?* The word importeth, not only an act of necessity, but of violence, thou shalt do it, and in the 13. of Zachery at the close, *Thou shalt call me thy Father.* And so in Ezek. 11. 19. Is not mortification a Christians duty, Col. 3. 5. *Mortify therefore your members;* and it is turned over in a promise, Jer. 32. 28. and Ezek. 36. 29. where he promiseth, that he will purge away all their uncleanness; and it is most clear, from Mic. 7. 19. *I will subdue* (saith he) *all thine iniquities,* it is not said, *thou must subdue them,* but *I will do it.* Is not also the knowledge of God a commanded duty? and yet it is turned over in a promise, in the Covenant of grace, *They shall know me from the highest to the lowest,* neither shall there be need any more, that one should say, *know the Lord,* for they shall be all taught of me. Is not the commandment of fear your duty, as it is clear, from Eccl. 12. 13. and yet that is likewise turned over in a promise, *I will put my fear in their inward part,* that they shall not depart away from me. So tenderness is a Christians duty; and yet it is turned over in a promise: *I will take away their heart of stone, and give them an heart of flesh.* And that I may say no more of this, look but to these four places, and there ye will see almost all duties turned over in promises; there is Jer. 31. Jer. 32. Ezek. 11. and Ezek. 36. ye will see all the duties of the Covenant converted into promises. But may not some say, what advantage is there of this? much certainly every way, that duties are turned over into promises: it may give a Christian hope, that he shall once perform these duties; will ye not once be tender? yes certainly, because your tenderness lieth within a promise; will ye not once be much in the exercise of fear? No doubt  
ye

ye will, and the ground of it is this, because your fear  
 liveth within a promise, and so of the rest. And, 2.  
 There is this advantage of it, that all the duties requi-  
 red of a Christian, are turned over in promises, because  
 by this means a Christian may go to God, when he  
 cannot perform such a duty, and desire him to fulfil  
 his word, and accomplish his promise; and so may  
 make use, not only of the Omnipotency of God, but  
 of the faithfulness of God also.

There is this third consideration that we would  
 propose, that there are some things of a Christian with-  
 in a promise, that he doth not believe to be within it,  
 especially these three; First, the challenges of a Chri-  
 stian are within a promise, when ye are convinced, that  
 is the accomplishment of a promise, this is clear from  
*Isa. 30. 21.* where convictions and challenges are turn-  
 ed over in a promise; *When thou art turning unto the*  
*right hand, or to the left; thine ears shall hear a voice*  
*behind thee crying, this is the way, walk in it:* And  
 it may be clear, that our convictions are the accom-  
 plishment of promises, because it is a work of the  
 Comforters, as well to conceive, *John 16. 9.* as it is for  
 him to make one rejoyce; and if a Christian could be-  
 lieve that his challenge were the accomplishment of  
 a promise, he might embrace his challenges, he might  
 see the faithfulness of God in his challenges, and he  
 might see much Love in his challenges. 2. A Christi-  
 ans cross is within a promise, so that when a Christian  
 meets with such afflictions, he may sit down and cry  
 out, this is the accomplishment of a promise, and this  
 is clear from *Psa- 89. 31, 32.* wherein the midst of the  
 promises of the Covenant of Grace; that promise of  
 visiting their iniquities with rods, is put in the bosom  
 of them; and from *Psa. 19. 77.* *In faithfulness hast thou*  
*afflicted me; Why doth David say, in faithfulness? It*  
*was this, because this cross was the accomplishment*  
 of



of a promise; and it may be clear also from that word, Heb. 12. 7. *Forget not the exhortation* (speaking of the cross) the word is, *Forget not the consolation* <sup>which that speaketh unto you.</sup> As if the holy Ghost did say, crosses do yield much consolation, as in vers. 11. *They yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness;* And if this were believed, that our crosses were the accomplishment of the promises, it would help a Christian unto much humble submission, and there would not be much murmuring under them, if once we did believe that they were the accomplishment of a promise; Yea, there is this advantage further, that if we did believe that our crosses were the accomplishment of a promise, we would be much in advancing holiness under our cross. There is nothing that obstructeth the sweet fruits of righteousness, under a cross so much as impatience; & I would say this to commend the cross, a Christian never moveth so swiftly to heaven, as when he is under a sanctified cross; a cross when it is sanctified, will prove a Christians motion to Heaven more then the enjoyments, for our enjoyments ordinarily do retard our way as much as further it. And there is this, Thirdly, that is within the promise, even your dayly food, and the hairs of your head; the hairs of a Christians head are numbered, and within the Covenant. So that ye may see what a high respect Christ hath put upon Christians, that is clear from that word, Psa. 117: 5, 8. *He hath given meat unto them that fear Him, He will ever be mindful of his Covenant.*

Our fourth Consideration shall be, to point out a little these grounds upon which Christ doth delay his accomplishment of the promises, it is certain that Christians is oftentimes put to this, *Doth his promise fail for evermore?* and cryeth out, *why art thou become unto me as a liar; and as waters that fail;* and the grounds of this delay are these; Christ knoweth that a Christi-

an can often better improve the delay of the accomplishment of the promise, then he can improve the accomplishment it self: we might find this in our experience, it being (for the most part) easier for a Christian to bear his crosses, then to bear his enjoyments: I think *David* never had so sweet a time, as then, when he was pursued as a Partridge by his son *Abson*; then grace did breathe forth most sweetly in his actions; but let *David* be under prosperity, and then we see he faileth in the sin of Adultery; And therefore never repine when ye are under a cross; for certainly, if we had spiritual understanding, we would not judge it so great a hazard to be under a cross, as under prosperity, since we have greater strength to bear the one, then to endure the other.

2. The sloathfulness of a Christian to whom the promises are made, this makes the promises to be delayed in their performance, as was clear in the people of *Israel*, they are forty years in a wilderness before that promise of entering into *Canaan* is accomplished; It was a promise that could have been accomplished in a few days, and yet because of their sin, it was not accomplished for forty years, ye may see from that word, in *Numb.* 14. 33, 34.

3. The accomplishment of the promises is delayed, that Faith may be more put in exercise; this is clear from that remarkable word, *Psa.* 105. 19. *until the time that his word came*; that is, until the word of the Lord was accomplished; the word of the Lord tryed him, that is, it was the matter of his exercise, an exercise especially unto Faith; for indeed it is much for a Christian to believe upon a word, when it is delayed in its accomplishment. The fourth ground of delay is, that the exercise of Prayer may be more; and it is certain, that the best improvement of delayes is, to be much in Prayer; the promises, they occasion prayer, as is clear from

*Exod.*



*Exod. 4. last , They believed, and bowed down their heads and worshipped , and from 2 Sam. 7. 27. where the great promises being made to David , he cryeth out, Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer unto God ; and it is clear from Psa. 119. 49. Perform the word unto thy servant , upon which thou hast caused me to hope. It is a bad improvement of delays, when we turn impatient , and it is a bad improvement of delayes , when we quite our confidence. Know that promises are accomplished after delayes, and they have a luster upon them, that they may compensate all the delayes. 5. There is this other ground of the delayes of accomplishment of the promises, even that the thing that is promised may be sweet to a Christian when it cometh : this is clear from that word of Solomon , Prov. 13. 12. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire doth come, is as a tree of life : O but a mercy that cometh to a Christian through a promise , it is sweet, yea, a drink of cold water taken up as the accomplishment of a promise, is more sweet then a feast of fat things full of marrow, wine on the lees well refined ; to take up your bread and your drink as the accomplishment of your promises, it would make them refreshful to you. 6. The Lord delayes his promises , that a Christian may be more in the exercise of dependency, and may be alwayes kept about the Throne. A Christian goeth to God from a threefold principle , he goeth to God from a principle of Faith, from a principle of necessity , and from a principle of love : but would you know that which putteth a Christian oftneft to God ? It is a principle of necessity : and believe it, that if necessity did not drive a Christian unto the foot of the Throne , we would seldom go from a principle of Love , or from a principle of Faith. And there is this last ground of the delay of the accomplishment of the*

the promises , that the glory of the wisdom of God may appear , and the glory of his power in the accomplishment of the promise. When the promise is long beneath ground, then the wisdom and power of God doth more appear in the accomplishment of that promise. And from this I would only say to Christians that are under that exercise, complaining of the want of the performance of the promises , these few things, believe that the promise shall once be accomplished , that *though the vision tarry, yet at last it shall speak*. 2. Believe, that every houres delay of the accomplishment of the promises hath a sweet design of love: there is not one moment of delay, but it is for the advantage of a Christian , as is clear from that word, *Rom. 8. 28*. And, 3. that promise that cometh after long delayes , it hath these three sweet and soul-refreshing attendants. 1. It is performed most seasonably, a Christian, if he will observe, he will see infinite wisdom shining in timing the accomplishment of the promise, to such a particular day : a Christian will be constrained to cry of it, if the promise had been fulfilled before, there had not been such Art of wisdom appearing in the performance of it. 3. That the promise when it is accomplished, will engage a Christian more in the exercise of Love , then four promises accomplished at a short and smaller time: there is nothing that will so inflame the soul with Love , as to have a promise accomplished after delayes. And, 3. The promises accomplished after delayes , have much sense waiting upon the performance thereof: I think hardly a Christian ever met with the accomplishment of a promise after long delay , but his *soul was made as a watered garden, and as springs of water, whose waters fail not*: this promise faileth and cometh to a Christian perfumed with love.

Now we shall shut up our discourse at this time, &  
shall



shall only speak to these six defects of a Christian Faith, in believing the promises. 1. That our faith is impatient, we cannot stay upon the promise, if it be delayed; Hence ye will see that in Scripture often, patience is annexed to faith; which speaketh this, that it is impossible for a Christian to believe as he ought, that wanteth the exercise of patience, See *Heb. 6. 12. Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise*; And that word is *Rev. This is the faith and patience of the Saints*. 2. Our faith in-closing with the promises it is most unconstant; A Christian when first a promise is born in upon his spirit, he will then believe the promise and joy with it; but after six or seven days go about, he will change his Faith; that is remarkably clear from *Exod. 4. 31. compared with Exod. 6. 9.* When first the promise cometh to the people of *Israel*, that they shall go out of *Egypt*, it is said of them in the fourth Chapter at the close, *They believed the promises and worshipped*; But look to them in *Exod. 6. 9.* and there ye will see them not believing, because of *bitterness and anxiety of heart*; And I will tell you the grounds where our Faith is unconstant; 1. Sometimes the reading of a promise to a Christian will be as savory meat, sometimes when a Christian will read one time in the Covenant, it will be perfumed with Love, and his soul will be transported with joy after it, and at another time when he shall read that promise again, it will be *tasteless as the white of an egg*; and as his sorrowful meat. 2. That we are not much in studying the exercise of the things that are promised, which certainly would cut short many of our debates. There is the third defect of our Faith, that we are not diligent; a diligent Faith we call this, that after a Christian hath believed, he would be much in the exercise of prayer for the accomplishment of the promise, he

would

would be much in the exercise of meditation to make that promise sweet and lively to him. And a fourth defect is this, We build our Faith more upon dispensations than upon the Word; when dispensations say that which the promise saith, then we will believe; but when dispensations speak the contrary language unto the promise, then we will reject our confidence and hope. I will tell you two great mysteries of believing, it is hard for a Christian to believe when the commentary seemeth to destroy the Text, that is, when the commentary seemeth to declare, that the promise shall never be accomplished. In sum it is this, It is hard to believe when dispensations will say the word of the Lord will fail, and when promises bids you believe. 2. It is hard for a Christian to take impossibilities in the one hand, and the word of promise in the other, and say, O precious Christ, reconcile these two together, that impossibilities do not destroy the promise, but that the promise may be accomplished, notwithstanding of this. 3. We have these defects of faith amongst us, that we build our Faith more upon sense than upon the word of promise; when a Christian is in a good frame, he will believe, but when Christ hideth his Face, he will then give his hope; And lastly, there is this that our Faith upon the promises is general, we believe the truth of the promises, but we study not to make a particular application of them. I shall not stand long to make any use of what we have spoken; Only I would have the Christians of this age, and those that are here, to go home with this conviction, the damnable neglect of believing the promises. A Christian neglecteth these three duties of Religion most, he neglecteth the duty of self-examining, the duty of believing the promises, and that noble soul-exalting duty of meditation: these three duties a Christian doth so constantly neglect, that almost he

is



Is above the reach of conviction, that he doth neglect them. But I would say a word unto these that are destitute of the Faith of the Promises, and are strangers unto these blessed things that are recorded within the Covenant: And it is only this; doubtless ye must believe your senses, if ye will not believe his Word. It is a question indeed, which of all the senses shall be most satisfied in Heaven, whether that of seeing, *when we shall behold the King in his beauty, and see him as he is*; or that of hearing, when we shall hear these melodious *Hallelujahs* of that *innumerable company*, which are *about the Throne*; without any jarring amongst them all; or that of smelling, when we shall find the sweet perfume of his garments, which are perfumed *with all the powders of the Merchant*; or that of touching, when we find *Maries* inhibition taken off, *touch me not*, and be admitted to embrace him who is now *ascended to his Father*; or that of tasting, when we shall drink of these *rivers of Consolation*, that shall never run dry. This, I say, is indeed a question; But give me leave to tell you, O atheists and enemies of God: It is also a question, which of all the five senses of a Reprobate shall be most tormented in Hell, & what would you answer to it now? whether think ye the sense of sight, when ye shall behold that darkness of wrath, the devil and his angels, and your fellow prisoners in that dungeon? Or whether shall your sense of hearing be most tormented in hell, when ye hear these screechings and howlings that shall eternally ascend up before God, by the souls that are in prison? O but the greatest enemy would have compassion upon his enemy to hear their crys: Or whether will ye say the sense of tasting shall be most tormented, when ye shall drink of these *rivers of brimstone*? Or will the sense of touching, when ye shall be eternally scorched with these flames, of eternal indignation? Or the sense of smelling, when

when ye shall eternally be as it were suffocated with the smoke of that sulphurous furnace that shall never be quenched. O think you if *Cain* would come from hell and preach that doctrine, that we should not persecute the saints, would we listen unto him? If *Abaddon* should come from hell, and should preach against the evil of ambition, would we listen unto him? and if *Achitophel* should rise from the dead, and preach that doctrine unto you, *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom*, would we stop our ears? Or if *Judas* would come from hell, and preach to you the evil of hypocrisie, in betraying the Son of man with a kiss, would we believe him? Or if *Dives* that is recorded in the Gospel should come from hell, and choise that Text to preach upon, *Jam. 5. 1. Go to ye rich men and howl, and weep for your miseries that shall come upon you.* And if *Demas* would come and second him with that word, love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. I fear ye would cry out, we will embrace that doctrine at another time. We desire not to insist much upon these; but, O to believe, that there is an eternity of pain, and that there is an eternity of joy. I will give you a description of the atheist, and let him think upon it, it is easier to convince hundreds of you, that ye want the fear of God, then that ye want the faith and love of God. Oh, an imaginary faith, and a conceit of love, will ye ever quite these two idols. I confess, once ye shall have a Faith that no man shall ever rob you of, and that is, the faith of that truth, that when once ye enter into eternity of pain, there is no redemption out of that place. Awake, awake, for behold the Judge cometh, and he shall render vengeance unto these that know him not. To his blessed and most precious Name, we desire to give praise.



## SERMON III.

2 Pet. 1. 4. whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

**T**Hough Justice and Judgement be the habitation of his Throne, yet Mercy and Truth do go before it as two divine Ushers to convey us home unto God. There are these two things that we would have Christians principally to study; 1. That ye would be much in the study of these wrongs and injuries that ye have done to Christ. And, 2. That ye would be much in the study of these infinite acts of precious condescendency that Christ hath manifested towards you, that the one may provoke you unto sorrow and humility, and the other may provoke you unto a sweet astonishment and admiration. And I would ask you this, if Christ should present that challenge unto you, which Absalon presented unto Hushai, *Is thy kindness unto thy friend?* O beloved, what could you answer, when you were thus reproved? I think if Christ have not forgetfulness for that blessed end, to forget the wrongs and injuries of his own, I know not unto what use Christ should have forgetfulness; for he knoweth not what it is to forget our good works, but he hath a blessed art of forgetting our wrongs, though we may say on the contrary that we have a cursed art of forgetting them our selves. There are these three things that a Christian doth forget; they much forget Christ, that is the great Author of the Promises, so that he may charge them with this, *why have ye forgotten me?* 2. They forget their mercies, and these divine receipts of love, that Christ hath given unto them. 3. They forget even their iniquity, yea, sometimes they forget them before Christ doth forget them, and pass

an act of pardon upon them. I shall not stand long to plead with you for undervaluing of that blessed and noble plant of renown; I think if there were no more evidence that low esteem that we have of Christ, but only this, that we are so much in slighting the promises, it were more then sufficient; but besides, is there not this to testifie how much you undervalue that *holy and just one*; that ye study more to have an inward. We may call the Christians of the time *Nephtalie*; they are as a *hinde let loose*, and they give goodly words, but we do not give Christ godly practice; and is there not this also that testifieth our undervaluing of Christ, that we slight so much secret and retired correspondence and communion with him? I suppose there are some that are here, whose consciences beareth them record, they do not exercise themselves unto godliness, and I shall only say that word, that *Gideon* spake in another case, *If God be with us, how then is all this come upon us?* such a spirit of formality, such a spirit of laziness, such a spirit of hardness, and such a spirit of undervaluing of Christ? I suppose that if there were a Chronicle written of all the lives of the Saints that have been since *Adams* days; and the Christians of this time should read over that Chronicle, when they should begin to read the life of *Adam*, they might put this to the close of it, my life is not like his; & when they should read the life of *Abel*, they might put this to the close of it, my life is not like his; and when they should read the life of *Enoch*, they might put this to the close of it, my life is not like his: O to which of the Saints can we go? and if ye should call, is there any that would answer you, *thy life is like mine.*

But to come to the words; we told you at the last occasion that we spake upon them, that there were these things concerning the promises, holden forth in them, The rise of the promises is holden forth in these words, *whereby*, or as we cleared, the word may be thus



rendered, *by whom*, which relateth unto Jesus Christ

The second thing concerning the promises holden forth in the verse, is, the property of the promises, and they are these four; 1. That the promises are *freely* holden forth in that word, *whereby are given unto* all the promises of the everlasting Covenant are *freely* and not debt. There is that second property of the promises, that they are *unchangeable*, holden forth in that word, *Given*, the gifts and the calling of God *lasting without repentance*. And the third property of the promises was, That they were exceeding *Great* and the fourth, That they were exceeding *Precious*.

The third thing concerning the promises, holden forth in the words, is the advantages that floweth unto a Christian by the promises, that by them they might be *made partakers of the divine nature*.

And the last thing concerning them was, that time when the promises were especially accomplished, was then, *when we had escaped the pollutions of the world through lust*.

Now as for the first thing, to wit, the fountain, original and rise of the promises, which is Jesus Christ *by whom*; In speaking unto this, we shall speak a little unto these two; 1. In what respects Christ may be said to be the fountain and original of the promises and we conceive he may be said to be so; First, because he purchased the promises unto us by his own precious blood. There is not a promise in all the everlasting Covenant, but it is the price of the blood of the Son of God; this is clear in *Ephes. 2. 12*, where speaking of the Gentiles that they were strangers unto the Covenant of promise: he setteth down in the 13. vers. the way by which they were brought near unto the Covenant, and had right unto it, *it was through the blood of his cross*: and it is clear in *Ephes. 3. 6*. that the promises of the Gospel were given *unto us in him*, that is, through the purchase of him,

merits ; and 1 Pet. 1. 19. where we are said to be  
 bought by his blood, or, the promise of Redemption  
 as the price of blood. Secondly, Christ may be said  
 to be the fountain of the promises, in this respect,  
 that he is the person unto whom the promises of the  
 Covenant are first made, and through him are made  
 over unto us; this is clear in Gal. 3. 16. the promises  
 were given unto Abraham, not unto many seeds: but  
 unto one, that is Christ; and it is clear from 2 Tim.  
 1. 9. where the promises of grace and salvation are  
 said to be given unto us in him before the world was  
 made. It is true that the promises are not given to  
 Christ, considered only as the Son of God, (for so he  
 had no other relation to us then the Father or the Ho-  
 ly Ghost) but yet they are first made to him as the  
 Mediator and head of his Church, and as that blessed  
 Days-man, and King of Saints, and the great Lord  
 keeper of all the Rights of the young heirs of Glory;  
 And we all receive of his fulness, and grace for grace.  
 Thirdly, there is this respect, in which Christ may  
 be said to be the fountain of the promises, that he it  
 is by whom we have a right unto all the promises; this  
 is clear, 1 Cor. 3. 12, 13. where these two are con-  
 joyned, ye are Christs, and then, all things are yours; if  
 once a soul close with Christ in the Covenant of pro-  
 mise, there is not one promise in Scripture, but he  
 may write this superscription above it, This is mine,  
 this is mine. Fourthly, Christ may be said to be the  
 fountain of the promises, in regard that he is the per-  
 son that applyeth the promises, and maketh us to  
 rest upon them, and to believe them; this David did  
 acknowledge, Psa. 119. 49. Remember thy word unto thy  
 servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope, as if Da-  
 vid said, I had never believed a promise, except thou  
 hadst caused me; and it is clear, Eph. 2. 8. where faith  
 is called the gift of God, even faith to believe the pro-  
 mises, it is the royal donation and gift of Christ. 5. He



may be said to be the fountain of the promises, that he qualifyeth us for the accomplishment of the promises. Christ giveth us strength to obey the condition that is annexed to the promise, & Christ he infuseth habitual grace in us, by which we may be helped to exercise faith upon the promises; so that grant all the Scriptures were promises, yet if Christ did not help us, we would never believe a promise, and there would never a promise be accomplished unto us. 6. The last respect which Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, is, that all the promises of the everlasting covenant, they have their accomplishment through him according to that word, *2 Cor. 1. 20. All the promises of God are in him, yea, and in him Amen;* so that ye are to bless Christ, not only for the giving of the promises but for the accomplishment of them also.

That which secondly we shall speak to from this, that Christ is the fountain of the promises, shall be to press upon Christians these three excellent and soul-concerning duties; The first, that they would not have light account of the promises, since they are rivers and streams that flow from that blessed ocean: O but if a Christian did believe that the promise that he has for his daily bread, it was bought with the blood of the second person of the blessed Trinity, would he not have an high account of that promise? And let me tell you, it is impossible for the promises to be in high account with you, till once ye reduce them unto their rise, and to their fountain; but once know that all the promises are sweet streams of Love that have run through the heart of precious Christ & from thence they have flowed unto you, and then when this is believed, how shall ye sit down, and comfort your selves in the promises, and rejoyce exceedingly in them.

The second duty that we press upon you from this is, that since Christ is the fountain and original of the promises be much in the application of the promises.

and here I shall speak a little upon these three things; A little unto the evidences & marks of those that have right to apply the promises; & shal only name unto you these few: The first is, to be a person under convictions of sensible need and necessity of such a promise; have ye convictions of such a necessity? Then from that ye may infer, I have a right to the promises and are not these glad tidings? I know there are some that are under such convictions of their sin, that they think it boldness to apply the promises, but I would say this unto you, that if ye were under sensible convictions of your lostness, ye would give a world for an air of a promise whereby to hang: believe it, the exercise of misbelief is never at its hight, til ye would be content to dig through the earth to get a promise, & all we were at that, that our souls would pursue after them from the one end of the world to the other: & for the grounds of this assertion, that sensible necessity giveth a right to the promises, if ye wil look to these great promises of the everlasting Covenant, are they not given to that Christian that is under a need, *Is. 55.* 2. and *Mat. 11.* 28. where the great promise of the Gospel is given out, and the invitation of Jesus Christ, is unto these that are weary *and heavy laden.* Christ would account it an excellent courtisie, that ye would not dispute, but believe, and that ye would look upon your necessities as his call to believe the promises. A person that hath an high account of the promises, he hath a right to apply the promises. Let once your soul close with Christ by Faith and Love, and then you may with boldness close with the promises. I confess if ye were more in believing the promises, we would have a higher and more full esteem of the promiser: Would you know the reason that Christ is not accounted matchless, it is, because of this our necessities of the promises is not always within our sight, and our exercising of Faith upon the promises is not



our dayly work. 3. This looketh like a right to promise; that which is born in upon a Christians spirit when he is near God in prayer, and is under most sensible exercise of his own infirmity, he hath read a right to apply the promise: As for instance, when a Christian is debarring himself out of Christ, which but an unpleasant exercise; to meet with a promise born in upon their spirit, that giveth them some ground of hope, that they may apply and rest upon Christ; or when a Christian is fainting under affliction and is like to give over; to meet with a word of promise born in upon his spirit, that doth uphold him the day of his tryal, he may probably conclude he hath a right to believe that promise. 4. There is the evidence, persons that have a high account of the promises, that have a right to apply the promises, it is an excellent & most concerning work for a Christian to believe the excellency of the promises, when he cannot have the actual application of the promises. For when once a Christian cometh to this, that the great things of the everlasting Covenant are matchless in his eyes, then that is the *valley of Achor*; and a door of hope, where ere long Christ will apply them. 5. When a Christian hath great delight in the promises, when they are sweet to his taste, and are the refreshing and rejoicing of his heart, that is an undeniable sign that he hath a right to make use of such promises; were your souls never refreshed by reading of the boundless Covenant of love, & the sweet promises that are in it? I would have Christians marking these promises that have upheld them in their straits, I would have them marking the promises that have been lively to their souls, and say, this once was my goodly meat, and made me to rejoice in the *house of my affliction*; and I would have a Christian marking the time of the accomplishment of the promises, in which he will see infinite wisdom shining in ordering the accomplishment of the promises.

promises to such a time. And I would have a Christian marking the frame of his own spirit, when the promises are accomplished (as ye wil find often in Scripture) by all this, ye should find such a reviving and profitable delight in the promises, that should give a very full evidence of our right unto them. 6. Lastly, when a Christian under straits can receive consolation from no other thing, but all prove physicians of no value & miserable comforters; when a Christian is convinced, there is no joy to be had under such a cross but in the faith of the promises, that is an evidence that this person hath a right to the promises. I would only say this, O beloved in the Lord, is not this your guilt, your undervaluing of the promises, and your little exercise of faith? I would pose you with this, when last studied ye to apply any promise of the Covenant of grace? When last did ye exercise faith upon any of them? Shall I tell you what is the practice of the most part of us, we study perhaps to apply one promise, but for the rest of the promises we lay them aside, and do totally neglect them: we study to apply the promises of salvation, and of having redemption through Christ, but for the promises of sanctification, for the promises to help us to perform duties, for the promises to support us under the cross, for the promises to comfort us in our way to heaven, for promises in reference to all ordinary things, we are not much in application of these: O but if a Christian were believing the promises, he might sit down even while he is here, and sing one of the songs of Zion, though yet *but in a strange land.*

The second thing that I shall speak to upon the application of the promises, shall be to propose unto you some rules that ye would make use of in the application of them; and shall name unto you these,

First, Study these four things, one is the faithfulness and truth of the promises, that such a thing is



the saying of him that is the faithful witness, Amen : this was the practice of Paul, 1 Tim. 1. the way how he was brought to make application the promises was, 1. By laying down that conclusion this is a faithful saying ; and Rev. 21. from the beginning to the 6. verse where there are great promises made, and much spoken to the commendation of heaven, this is subjoyned in the 6. verse, *These are the faithful and true sayings of God.* As if John had said, all that I have spoken concerning heaven, will be to no purpose, except ye believe the truth of the promises, and this was the practice of David, 2 Sam. 7. 2. *thy words are truth O Lord*, he subjoyneth this unto the actual application of the promises. 2. Study the sweetness and excellency of the promises, this was the practice of Paul, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *This is a faithful saying*, and then he subjoyneth, *and worthy of acceptance*; And this was the practice of David, Psa. 119. 72. *I have esteemed the laws of thy mouth better than thousands of gold and silver.* O such an opinion, to esteem the promises here then thousands of gold. It is Heretodox amongst the most part of you, that prefer the world before the promises of the Covenant : and it was his practice, ver. 103. and 162. *I rejoyce at thy word as one that findeth great spoil*; he had higher account of the promises then to divide the spoil after war. 3. Let the Christian study the necessity that he hath of the promises, that there is no way of winning above that necessity, but by the closing with the promise, and laying hold upon it. 4. Lastly, A Christian would study the suitableness that is in the promise to answer their necessities, that if they be under need there is a precious way of remedy manifested unto them by these.

The second rule that we would prescribe in the application of the promises, is, that ye do not expect sensible comforts immediatly after ye have believed the  
pro

promise, A Christian may apply the Promises, and yet  
 1. want the joy and sweetness that is in them; This is  
 clear, *Psal. 119. 25. My soul cleaveth unto the dust,*  
 where he is under much anxiety and much sorrow;  
 and yet he is a believer of the promises in the mean  
 time, as the words following do clear, *Quicken me ac-*  
*cording to thy word*; he layeth claim to the promise,  
 and this is clear in the 81. ver. of that Psalm, *My soul*  
*hath faint within me*; There is much exercise of sor-  
 row, and yet he is a believer in the promise, *But I*  
*hope in thy word*; A Christian after he hath believed the  
 promise, he would put a blank in Christs hand con-  
 cerning the sweetness of the promise to be made out  
 in its own time. What is sense? It is the precious in-  
 dulgence of Christ that he giveth to his own. I would  
 press this upon you, prophesie nothing before your  
 believing of the promise; but having believed, ye may  
 surely prophesie that the promise shall be accom-  
 plished in its own time, and the word that he hath  
 spoken shall certainly come to pass: but as for sense, as  
 for quickening, as for comforting, as for receiving, ye  
 must put a blank in the hand of Christ to dispense  
 these things to you as he seeth fit.

The third rule in the application of the promises,  
 That ye do not build your Faith upon this, that  
 the promises shall be accomplished, because probabi-  
 lity and reason seem to say the thing: I would say  
 this to a Christian that ye may oftentimes suspect the  
 promise not near to be accomplished, when reason  
 saith, *Behold the word of the Lord cometh*, and that of-  
 tentimes the Lord is nearer when we begin to pass a  
 conclusion, the word is not at hand, and the time of  
 the accomplishment of the promises is not near: Cer-  
 tainly many times before Christ accomplish the pro-  
 mises, he will learn us to be living above sense and  
 reason, and he will have reason to submit to faith, and  
 he will have probabilities to contradict the accom-



plishment of the promises; and when probabilities furthest away, that is his time to work; this is clear these two signal deliverances of the people of *Israel* from *Egypt* and *Babylon*, *Exod.* 3. 4, 5. and *Ezek.* at the beginning. And therefore as a Christian will not quit his grip of the promises, because dispensations seem to contradict the accomplishment of the promises, and sometimes cryeth out, *Why art thou become untrue as a liar, and as waters that fail?* So on the other hand ye are to build your faith upon the promises and upon dispensations, even when favourable, seeing we know the way that Christ taketh many times to accomplish the promises, is by contrary means to our apprehension; *His paths are in the whirl wind, & his steps are not known.* And may we not cry out, who take up the ways of God, whose ways are more high than the way of an eagle in the air, or the way of a serpent upon the rock, or the way of a ship upon the sea, &c.

The fourth rule that we would prescribe unto you in the application of the promise, is, That ye will close absolutely with the promises, I mean, without limiting the only One. There is a limited closing with the promise, which is the frequent exercise of our hearts; we will close with the promise, but with a restraint laid upon Christ, that whensoever we begin to believe the promises, all things might go as we desire; this is the great occasion that we do so frequently reject our confidence, and do refuse our hope, when God doth not answer our peremptory expectations.

Fifthly, We give you this rule, that ye would look much upon Christ in the application of the promises. There is a three-fold sight of Christ that a Christian should have when he applyeth the promises, 1. A Christian should have a sight of the boundless and condescending love of Christ; that so he may be constrained to hope, and may be constrained to love. 2. A Christian should eye the faithfulness and unchangeableness of Christ.

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ties of Christ, that what his blessed lips have spoken, he will  
clearly so do, and what he hath said he will likewise bring to  
pass. And 3. In the application of the promises, he  
must eye the omnipotency of Christ, that what he  
hath said, he is able to bring to pass. And O when  
shall we have occasion to sing that song, *what hath God  
promised for us?* which was the song that Balaam sung,  
unto who yet was but a profane wretch.

For hath 6. There is this rule that we would prescribe unto  
and you in the application of the promises, that a Christi-  
an after he hath applyed them, he would be much in-  
clined to the exercise of Prayer for the accomplishment of  
our these promises; this was the practice of David,  
his friend Sam. 7. 27. When God in passing many precious  
promises, David doth subjoyn that word, *Therefore  
I have found in my heart to pray this prayer*; And we  
see in Ezek. 36. 37. along that Chapter, God is passing  
most excellent promises; and yet in verse 37. this  
is subjoyned, *For all these things, I will be enquired of  
of the house of Israel*: And in Jer. 29. 10, 12. where the  
time is coming when God would accomplish his good  
word (as he speaketh) that is subjoyned in ver. 12.  
*For ye shall call upon me, and seek after me.* And Daniel  
in ch. 2, 3. when Daniel knew that the promise was near  
the time of its accomplishment, then he set himself to  
desire prayer and supplication to seek the face of God. I would  
commend these three words unto a Christian; the smallest  
mercy that a Christian meeteth with, if he can call  
it Samuel, that is, *The son of prayer*, and if ye can call it  
Isaac, that is, *The child of promise*, he may then, and doth  
ordinarily receive much consolation in that mercy.  
It is not but a mercy flowing to a Christian through a pro-  
mise, if it were but a drink of cold water, and a piece  
of brown bread, it will be more excellent cheer, then  
all the dainties of the Kings of the earth. O but to eat  
and drink, taking these things as the accomplishment  
of the promises, this would make us eat our bread  
with



*with singleness of heart, and much chearfulness.* And the first is this, secondly, I would say unto you, when a promise is accomplished, and a Christian is not much in the exercise of Prayer in the accomplishment of it, or to a hundred if he lose not the sanctified use of the accomplishment of that promise. Ah, know ye not that a promise when it is accomplished, may be a curse to a Christian. That word is most terrible, *Mal. 2. 2. I will curse your blessings.* And the last word that I would say to this, is, that a Christian who believed the promises notwithstanding that dispensations seem to contradict it, that promise shall be made most refreshing unto his spirit, when it is accomplished. O but a christian that never had much jealousy, nor much staggering about the accomplishment of the promise when it cometh, it will be most refreshing unto him. And believe it, there is not one hours entertainment of jealousy about the accomplishment of the promise but it will impair the sweetness of the promise, when it is accomplished, except so far, that the transcendent and free love of Christ is seen in the accomplishment of them, notwithstanding of our misbelief.

The last rule that I shall offer a christian in his application of the promises, when ye meet with objections that ye cannot answer, but they do silence you; will tell you what ye should do with them, miske these obstructions and lay them by, This was the practice of believing *Abraham*, *Rom. 4. 9. He considered not his own body being weak, and the deadness of Sara's womb.* The weakness of his own body, & the deadness of *Sara's* womb were so strong objections in the way of the accomplishment of the promises; that he could not answer them; & the way he taketh to refute them was, *He did not consider them;* as it were, he forgot those objections and went about his duty.

The third thing that we shall speak to, in relation to the application of the promises, shall be somewhat for help

the helping a Christian that is standing at too great a distance to get the promises applied.

First, A christian would be much in the study of these experiences of the faithfulness of God, and what others have met with, when ye begin to apply a promise, ye may be helped in the Faith of applying promises, by beholding these great records of the faithfulness of God that are extant. This was the way the Angel took with *Mary*, Luk. 1.36. where helping her to believe that promise, that of her should be born the Messiah; this is the way that he strengthened *Moses*. *Thy cousin Elizabeth is now with child, and hath borne one six moneths, even she that was called barren.* And I will name only these two places in Scripture which may help you exceedingly, and strengthen you to believe the promises upon this account; There is that word in *Exod.* 12. 41, & 51. It is a most remarkable saying, *At the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that same very day, (there was not one day missed after the time that was set, was accomplished) In that same very day they came out, and this is marked in ver. 1. again:* And there is that word, *1 King.* 8. 56. where *David*, when he is singing most sweetly to God, he maketh an observation of this, *Loe (saith he) there hath been one word that God hath spoken to you by his servant Moses.*

2. Ye would be much in the consideration of your own experiences, that you have in the accomplishment of promises formerly. This was *David's* way that he sought to strengthen himself to believe the promise, *He hath delivered me from the rage of the Lion, and the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me from this uncircumcised Philistine,* *1 Sam.* 17. 35, & 37, 46. And this was the practice of the Apostle *Paul*, *2 Tim.* 4. 17, 18. *God hath delivered me from the cruel lion: And from thenceforth will subjoyneth, And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work: and this was his practice, 2 Cor.* 1. 10. where



where these three are sweetly knit together. *God hath delivered me, he doth deliver me, and he shall deliver me.* There is not one experience of this kind but it preacheth that unto you, O believe the promise and do not call in question his faithfulness.

3. There is that help, that ye study much the excellency of the promises, that is the most noble and excellent way to move you to apply the promises, according to that word, *Psa. 119. 111. I have made testimonies my heritage for ever; and the ground of it is that, because they are the rejoicing of my heart.* The sweetness of the promises would engage our heart to apply them. And there is that fourth help, a Christian would study the Omnipotency of God, that so he may be helped to believe and apply the promise: This is clear in *Zech. 12. 1.* where God going to pass many excellent promises, he ushers in that discourse with high and majestick descriptions of his power, in that *he stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.* And this was the practice of *Abraham*, *Rom. 4. 2.* the way how he came to believe the promise, *He counteth him able that made it,* that he might perform it. Fifthly, For your help in applying of the promise, Study much the unchangeableness of Christ, and his faithfulness; know that he is the same, yesterday, and today, and for ever. This was the way that *Sarah* came to the faith of the promises, *Heb. 11. 11.* *She believed, and the ground of it is, that she judged him faithful that he had promised.* There is not one act of misbelief that a Christian falleth into, but it saith, that God is not faithful, and that he is not true.

Now the last duty that we would press from this point, that Christ is the fountain of the promises, is that we may have an high esteem of the promises, even of Jesus Christ, in whom they are yea, and Amen. And I shall close at this time with this, are there not

Go many here that have no respect unto him who is that  
 all de faithfulness and the Amen; who hath promised us him-  
 kind self, and all things : and if ye will not take with the  
 omise challenge , let your hearts but answer these two or  
 three things. 1. Hath not the loss of things in the world  
 excel affected your heart more then ever absence from Christ  
 did? Hath it not? And can such a soul say, I have an high  
 account of the Promiser? Is it possible, that these that  
 de th wil mourn more under the absense of their idols, then  
 if it is for the want of him , that they can have an high ac-  
 count of Jesus Christ? I am perswaded of this, there  
 are some Merchants , that the loss of their goods at  
 the Sea hath diverted them from their nights rest, and  
 so yet absence from Christ never divert them from their  
 sleep one hour. O when did love to find out Jesus  
 Christ, & to enjoy his fellowship, make you rise up in  
 the silent watches of the night, & to pursue after Him.  
 2. Have not your souls delighted more on the enjoy-  
 ment of the things of a world, then ever they did in  
 the enjoyment of Christ. Is not this true, that the in-  
 crease of wine and oyl, and of silver and gold, hath  
 affected your hearts more with joy than ever Christ  
 did? and have you a high esteem of the Promiser?  
 3. Are you taking delight to entertain fellowship and  
 communion with the Promiser? Is this true? when went  
 you to your Prayers, but ye wearied ere ye went a-  
 way? & have you a high account of the Promiser? Is not  
 that the language of your hearts, *O when shall the Sab-  
 bath be over? and when shall the new Moon be gone, that  
 I may pursue after my idols?* I would pose you with this,  
 is not there were no eye to take notice of you, would you  
 not slight secret Prayer? would you not slight Family  
 Prayer? We love not to serve Jesus Christ. I know  
 es, there are Atheists here, that would love to go to Hea-  
 ven; even without Faith, Love, Prayer, and Repentance, they  
 would love to go to Heaven by a way that never one  
 went before them. And now I shall say but this one  
 word



word to you that are the heirs of the promise, and have the blessed expectation of Heaven, whatever the world do, esteem ye highly of him: O remember to comfort your selves in the thoughts of the blessed day, which Christ (after he hath past the sentence of condemnation upon the wicked) shall go in upon the heads of the Troups of the first-born, he shall walk before as through the Ports of the new Jerusalem having crowns of immortal glory upon his head, & then shall follow after Him his Angels, & then shall follow after Him the blessed company of the first-born, every one having the harps of God in their hands, and they shall be singing as they enter in through the Ports of the City, *Hallelujahs unto him that was dead and is alive and now liveth for evermore.* O, to believe that day when first we shall enter in through the Streets of the New Jerusalem, when we shall be cloathed in white robes, having crowns upon our heads? O, such a day if it were believed, might make us often shake our glass, and *stretch out our necks*, (as the word is, *Rom. 8. 19.*) till once we saw that blessed day were approaching to us? There is no wearying in Heaven, the promises are now accomplished unto them, and they are inheriting the promises; when shall that word be accomplished, or when shall we have occasion to say it? *Mark 1. 37. Behold all men seek after thee.* O, the word that these Disciples spake to Christ: O, study to love him, study to believe on him, for, be persuaded he is upon his way. And I shall say no more but this, that all the promises, that are within the bounds of this everlasting Covenant, they are yea, and Amen in an imbraced Christ, and laid hold on by faith: so I say, all the curses that are in *Deut. 25. 27, 28.* all the curses that are within the volumn of the book of this Covenant, they shall be yea, and Amen in a despised Christ, and not be laid hold upon by faith.

## SERMON III.

Pet. i. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

Sometimes the soul of a Christian doth move in the paths of God, and in the way toward Zion as the chariots of *Aminadab*, when they are under the after soul enlivening and quickning influences of Heaven, and sometimes the soul of a christian doth move in those y shallessed paths as *Pharaoh* chariots, they drive most heavily when there is a cloud between the precious face of Christ and them: and we conceive, that sound spiritual exercise of Faith upon the promises of the would make Christians motion more swift towards white heaven. We grant Christ hath three different ways a day of guiding sons and daughters to glory: There are some that Christ carrieth to Heaven in a chariot *paraded* with love, that all alongs their life, they are living within sight of that promised Land, and are ever taken up with the refreshing of heavenly joys; such, and one was *Enoch*, who spent his days in walking with word God: there are some that Christ guideth to heaven in a chariot that is drawn with speckled horses; O, they have mixed dispensations of sorrow and joy attending them in their walk, and they have a winter and a summer, they have a night and a day, and such one was *Job*. 3. There are some that Christ carry to heaven in a fiery chariot, that all alongs their life they are under distracting terror of the most high, faith are living perpetually to their own apprehensions upon the borders of hell, and such a one was *Heman*, whom Christ thus guided to heaven: however if we shall go there, we need not much dispute the way how we came, for he doth all things well. And upon the other part, Satan hath three different ways of guiding souls



souls unto everlasting torment : there are some that  
 Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of delusions, making  
 them believe that they are still going to heaven ; and  
 such are the hypocrites in Sion: and I shall say, I think  
 that chariot was never so filled as it is in these days.  
 O fear that anxious disappointment that many of you  
 (it is like) will meet with! An hypocrite, he hath strong  
 hopes, he hath strong idols, he hath strong delusions,  
 these are his three attendants. And there are some that  
 Satan carryeth to hell in a chariot of profanity & ig-  
 norance of God, *whose judgement goeth before hand*, and  
 they are known that they are going there. And there  
 are some that Satan carryeth to hell in a chariot of  
 vanity, whose Religion stands in this, *concerning*  
*letter of the Law to be blameless*. And certainly, be-  
 lieving of the promises, and studying to exercise faith  
 upon them, is that which might prevent many of these  
 damnable soul-destroying & murdering delusions that  
 are within some of our breasts. There are three things  
 in Scripture that are called precious: Christ he is called  
 precious, 1 Pet. 2. 7. Faith is called precious, 2 Pet.  
 1. 1. *To you that are partakers of the like precious faith*  
*with us*; and the promises they are called precious,  
 the words that we have read, and Faith (as it were)  
 hath two blessed eyes, by one of these it beholdeth  
 Christ, and by another of these it beholdeth the pro-  
 mises, and fixeth it self upon them. O christians, are  
 you expectants of Heaven, would you know what is the  
 rise of all the sad things that have befallen you  
 these days? It is this, in short, ye believe not the pro-  
 mises. O christians, what is the reason that ye carry  
 not your crosses with patience? It is, because  
 ye believe not the promises by which your souls may  
 be upholden in the day of your affliction. O chris-  
 tian, what is the rise of your little mortification?  
 It is not because ye believe not the promises; for  
 them ye should be made partakers of the divine

sure. O christian, what is the ground that ye pray  
 so little, and that you pray with so little success?  
 It is because ye believe not the promises. A christi-  
 an, when he goeth to pray, he should take these  
 two things along; 1. The sensible convictions of  
 his necessities: And, 2. The precious promises that  
 is given to answer that necessity, the one would pro-  
 voke fervency, and the other Faith. Are there not  
 some here that knoweth not what it is to pray upon  
 a promise, and that maketh you to pray to so little  
 purpose. O christian, what is the reason of your  
 so much sorrow, and of your little spiritual comfort?  
 It is that ye believe not the promises: It is no wonder  
 that your names be called *Marah*, because ye exercise  
 not faith upon the precious promises of God. I think  
 without wronging you or any that are here; I doubt  
 much if ever christians had such hearts, as the most  
 part of us have: O what a heart is that, that can nei-  
 ther pray nor praise? both are alike mysteries unto  
 them; What a heart is that, O christian that can nei-  
 ther believe promise, believe threatnings, nor obey  
 commands? What a heart is that, that can neither  
 sorrow for sin, nor rejoyce in God? and what a heart  
 is that, that can neither love Christ when he is pre-  
 sent, nor can they long for Christ when he is absent,  
 and what a heart is that, O christian, that can neither  
 love heaven, nor can fear hell? and is there not such  
 hearts with us, even with us that are here this day.  
 At the last occasion that we spake upon these words,  
 we spake a little to the first thing in them, which was  
 the rise and original of the promises, holden forth in  
 that word, *whereby* or *by whom*. The second thing in  
 the words, was the properties of the promises; and  
 we told you that there were these four holden forth  
 in the words. The first property of the promises, is,  
 that they are free, which is imported in that word, *are*  
*given;*



*given* ; all the promises of the everlasting Covenant being the precious and free gifts of God. Hence you will see that oftentimes the tenor of the Covenant of Grace runs upon that strain , *I will give you* , as is clear, Jer. 32. and 39. *I will give one heart*, & Ezek. 36. 26. *I will give you a new heart*, and Ezek. 11. 19. *I will give you* ; it is the strain of the language of the Covenant of Grace, to give.

Now in the speaking upon this first property of the promises, to wit, *their freedom*. I shall speak a little unto these two, the first thing shall be to point out unto you the way how a christian may win to the distinct uptaking of the freedom of the promises, and then I shall from thence press some duties.

And in short, as to the first , we conceive that a Christian may win to the distinct uptaking of the freedom of the promises , by these considerations  
 1. Let a Christian cast his eye upon the sweet rise, and spring or fountain of the promises, and there ye will see their freedom shining most clear : for what is the fountain of the promises ? Is it not the boundless and everlasting love of Christ : this is clear, *Dent. 7. 8.* where God giving a reason of all the great things that he had performed for them, he setteth down the rise of it, *Because I loved you*, saith he : & again the ground of this is ; *Because I loved you* ; There being no reason of love , but love : and it is clear , *2 Sam. 7. 2.* where *David* having received many precious promises, he setteth down the rise of all these in that verse *For thy words sake* , saith he, *and according to thine own heart* , *hast thou done all these things to make them known to thy servant*. And it is clear, *Ezek. 17. 18.* where God calleth the time of entering into Covenant with them, *a time of love* ; that love, it was eminently shining in that day, when God did condescend to Covenant with them : And hence ye see in Scripture , that the promises they are called by the  
 nam

name of mercy , Mic. 7. 20. To perform the mercy to you Abraham, which is the Promises; and they are so called; because mercy and boundless love is the sole fountain and spring of all these promises. Secondly, consider the persons who have a right to make use of the promises. Must not the promises be free when the Proclamation is upon these terms, Rev. 21. 17. *Who-soever will , let him come* , there is nothing to give you a right to the promises, but only a willingness to embrace them , if ye will ye may take them. And thirdly, ye may read the freedom of the promises, in this, that any condition which is annexed to the promise , Christ giveth to the Believer strength to perform that condition; It is known that faith is the condition of the promises , and it is certain that Christ giveth a Believer that condition as well as he giveth him the promise , Philip. 1. 29. *To you it is given to believe*; and Eph 2. 8. *It is the gift of God* ; It is impossible for a Christian to perform the condition, except Christ who is surety for him did perform it. Fourthly, ye may read the freedom of the promises, if ye consider the time when the promises are accomplished, it is often at such a time, when the Christian hath been, and is under no very spiritual frame. Hence ye will see in Ezek. 16. 60, 61. That when the promises are accomplished , then God requireth *confusion and blushing of face* , because of their former ways, and Ezek. 36. 34. when the promises are accomplished, then that is the time when the Lord calleth them to remember their own evil ways, and their doings that were not good ; yea he will have them and all the world to know, *it is not for their sakes that he doth this*, therefore he commandeth them to be *ashamed and confounded for their own ways* , or the posture they were in when he accomplished his promises : And if there were no other thing to speak the freedom of the promises, but the trying of the accomplishment of



of them with such a frame, it were more then sufficient; but besides this, see *Dauids* practice, 2 *Sam.* 8. he readeth the freedom of the promises, from own imperfections, *What am I* (saith he) *and what my fathers house, that thou shouldest have brought me therto?* And even in the same Text, there is an Emphasis in that word *to us*, whereby are given to us, as if the Apostle did say, to prove that the promises are gifts; I can bring no other argument so strong for this, *They are given us*. Fifthly, Ye may read the freedom of the Promises, if ye will consider and take the infinite fulness and all-sufficiency of the Promises, that there is nothing without himself that can persuade him to give such promises. Hence ye will see *Gen.* 17. 1. when he is making the Covenant with *Abraham*, he putteth it still in the frontispiece of the Covenant, *I am God all-sufficient*, as it were, to put off all thought of merit that *Abraham* might have, and that *Abraham* might be perswaded of this, that there was not any imaginable perfection in himself, that could be the ground and rise of such promises. And there is that lastly, from which ye may read the freedom of the promises, if ye consider the greatness of these promises, if they were of a lower nature, they were it less to be wondred, if merit should come in to plead for it self; but when a Christian shall compare himself, and the greatness of the promises together, cannot but then sing that blessed song, *These are the gifts and donations of God, and what am I, and what is my fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?*

Now the second thing that we purposed to speak to, is, to press some duties upon you from this, that the promises are free, and we shall lay before you these three; The first, That since the promises of God are free, then as you would not destroy your own souls, be much in making use and application to the promises: Are not the promises your life? D

For all the Saints that went to heaven before us, go to Heaven, living upon the promises? there was not a step of *Abraham's* life; but he walked with a promise in it; there was not an affliction that *Abraham* met with, but he took comfort to himself from the promises; and I shall remove these two mistakes that are incident to christians in the application of the promises, even from these grounds, that they are three;

The first is this, There are some christians that will not apply the promises, because they are under the convictions of their own infirmities, and of their own baseness: so that when we press you to believe the promises, ye reject this counsel because ye consult with your own infirmities. This was the practice of *David*, *Psal. 22. 4. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted and were delivered:* but he durst not trust in the 6. verse, *But I am a worm, and not a man, I am a reproach among the people.* And it is that same divinity that is in these days, when we press you to believe the promises, because of the great cloud of witnesses that have gone before you, that believed the promises. O say ye, if I were like *David* and *Abraham*, I would believe the promises, but truly *David* said that same that lived before you, If I were like my fathers, I would believe the promises, but I am not like my fathers. And therefore I would say to you these two words; 1. Are ye inferiour or short unto *David* in holiness, or necessities? We do not question but all of you will answer, we are not inferiour to *David* in necessities, but in holiness; Then say ye, if we be not inferiour to *David* in necessities, then make use of the promises; for as we cleared the last day, necessities giveth a right in making use of the promises. 2. I would say, I am certainly perswaded, that sensible necessity would cut short many of our formal debates, in closing with the promises, necessities (as ye use to speak) hath no Law, and necessity hath no

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manners. Let me say that to you who will not close with the promises, that if ye were under sensible necessity, if Christ should forbid you to close with such a promise, ye would close with it though he forbade you, as the woman of *Canaan* did, there is not but sensible necessity will overcome it: necessity never disputes its right, for it goeth over the belly of such a dispute, it presently maketh use of that that need calleth for.

Secondly, There is that other mistake among Christians in believing the promises, that they want the qualifications annexed to the promises, and therefore they dare not believe the promises, especially the promise of closing with Christ, they think they are not under such a deep measure of humiliation, of sorrow for sin, nor under such a lively apprehension of the excellency of Christ. And I shall say but these things unto these that will not close with Christ, because they want qualifications, or at least, have not these qualifications after such a way. First, Let me tell thee (O christian that thus disputes,) go between the first steps of a christians way to heaven, and the last, and see if ye can behold a grave upon which this is written. Behold here lieth a man or a woman that came to Christ to embrace him, and he would not receive them; Did ye ever behold such a grave as this? And why then do ye so much dispute? Will ye take the tryal of Christ; whether he will refuse you if ye come, and if he shall refuse you, sure I am he will do that which he never did to any before you: The 2. thing I would say to such, that the want of such degrees of such things, ought not to be a ground of your not closing with Christ; for if ye had these qualifications that ye require, ye would maintain the same dispute that ye do now; for when we desire you to close with Christ, ye answer, that your sorrow is not come to such a height as it ought, nor is your humiliati

come to such a height, as you pitch for your self to  
 me to. O Christian, if ye come to ten times more,  
 yet ten times more, ye would have that same dis-  
 te then which ye have now; and the ground of it  
 this, the more that a Christian hath real sorrow,  
 will oftentimes be the more in the apprehension  
 at he hath not sorrow. Thirdly, If ye want the qua-  
 cations that are required in these that should close  
 th Christ in the Covenant of promise, then come  
 Christ to get these qualifications. I would only  
 at you, think ye to spin sorrow for sin out of  
 ur own hearts? Think ye to spin humiliation for  
 out of these wretched breasts of yours? ye must  
 ne to Christ for sorrow, as well as ye come to  
 rist for life. Fourthly, All the qualifications that  
 annexed unto that promise of closing with Christ  
 coming to him, they point out rather the quali-  
 tion of them that will come, then the qualificati-  
 of those that ought to come: Ye read such a com-  
 nd as that, *Come unto me all ye that are wearyed*  
*heavy laden.* O say ye, I am not weary, and  
 n not under the burden of sin, therefore I can-  
 come: I will tell you what is the meaning of that  
 mand, Christ inviteth those who have the great-  
 unwillingnesse, to come and get willingnesse: But  
 hal it sheweth this, none will come to get rest from  
 rist, but these that are first weary, and that this is  
 Lords method of working, first to make weary, &  
 n to ease, but no such matter in his word. That  
 we must have a wearinesse of our own making,  
 else he will not receive us; now but when ye come  
 will be weary, and he will receive you. Fifthly, let  
 say to you who thus disputes, make your want of  
 qualifications the very ground of your closing with  
 rist; I shal but in three places let you see this strange  
 ming of Faith in closing with the promises: There  
 hat, *Psal. 40. 11. 12. Let thy truth continually*  
 preserve



*preserve me*, that is, let thy promises be accomplished, and made lively unto me, which are my preservation: and would ye know the ground and reason that he annexeth unto this; For, saith he, *Innumerable evils compass me about, they have taken hold of me, that I am not able to look up.* He makes his very want of qualifications, the grounds of closing with the promise, and seeking the accomplishment of it; and there is that second expression which is most wonderful, *Psal. 25. 11. David prayeth for the accomplishment of that promise, Pardon my sin,* upon that same very account, *because it is great.* And I shall give you a third place in which the closing of Faith is most mysterious, *Exod. 33. compared with Exod. 34. 9.* In the first place, he denieth the accomplishment of the promise of *going up amongst the people;* And the ground he giveth of it. *Because, saith he, ye are a stiff-necked people.* And in *Exod. 34. verse 9.* When Moses is praying for the accomplishment of that promise, *That God would go amongst the people,* he taketh that same very argument out of the mouth of God; *Go up amongst us; For, saith he, we are a stiff-necked people;* God said, he would not go up, because they were a stiff-necked people, and Moses desired him to go up because of this. And there is this lesson which we would say to you, that so much dispute ye would have these qualifications that ye want, would study to close with Christ by Faith; Would ye have sorrow for sin? then believe; Would ye have high thoughts of Christ? then believe; Would ye have humiliation? then believe; for believing is another grace unto all these.

The second duty that we would press upon you from this consideration, that the promises are free; that when the promises are given to you, and accomplished, ye would study to be denied to merit in yourselves, which ye may suppose to be

come of the giving or accomplishment of the promises.  
 y proere is nothing that a Christian receiveth, but it is  
 d reauit of infinite love: there is not a conviction that  
 , Innsteth a Christian, but it is the fruit of infinite love:  
 kenere is not one real sigh for sin, but it is the fruit  
 e ma infinite love; there is not one blink of the precious  
 ds of antenance of Christ, but it is a fruit of infinite love:  
 omplere is not the least degree of hatred against sin, but  
 n whs the fruit of infinite love; there is not the least  
 yeth omise that is accomplished unto you, but it is the  
 rdon it of infinite love; so that upon your receipts from  
 is grnd, there is reason to sing that song, *Nôr unto us, not*  
*in theo us, but unto thee doth belong the glory*: And there-  
 3. ce, I would press this upon you, O Christians, reduce  
 , O your mercies unto the fountain, and there sit  
 of gown and pen songs of everlasting praise to him. Will  
 of i but take a view of this, there is not one bit of bread  
 nd cat ye eat, that is within a promise, but it is a mercy  
 omplat hath come running to you through the bowels  
 gft the tender heart of Christ: his heart is the fountain of  
 e mo our mercies, and they sweetly stream out of that  
 e a precious fountain; so that if ye had no other thing to  
 becommend your mercies from, but that it is a gift of  
 define heart of Christ, ye may take it in your arms upon  
 this his account, and solace your selves with it.

pute The last duty that we would press upon you from  
 nt, is consideration, that the promises are free, is this;  
 ould would be studying to close with Jesus Christ that  
 ye h promised and freely holden out to you in the Go-  
 ouldel; O sinner of eighty years old, O sinner of sixty  
 is a ars old, O atheist of forty years old, and O sin-  
 r of twenty years old and downward! I do here  
 on wite you, as the Ambassadour of Jesus Christ, to  
 re frbrace Christ freely offered to you in the promi-  
 and; yea, I do invite you by all the vertues of that  
 to ble *Plant of Renown*; by that everlasting love that  
 o be



dwelt in his precious heart, by all the suffering wounds that he received, by his eternal glory, by all the blessings and joyes of heaven, and by love that ye owe to your precious and immortal that ye would come and imbrace him freely offer you in the Gospel. And for the further pressing this, and for clearing of the way of your cleaving with him, I shall first propose some Gospel mystrie and sweetly agreeing contradictions, (if so we speak) held forth in Scripture, 1. *Come and buy Christ and yet buy him without money*; that is, come and receive Christ, and ye shall have as unquestionable right to him as if ye had bought him, that is to *buy without money*: ye have nothing to commend you to Christ but necessities, and necessities bid you go, Christ biddeth you come, why then will ye sit still? call? 2. What a Gospel mystrie is that, *Ye are to buy Christ, and he is above price*, there is nothing we can give to buy that *pearl of greatest price*, yet we must buy him; then the meaning is, come and buy Christ by faith, and by forsaking of idols, this is all the price that he doth require for himself; and so he requireth nothing of you but what he himself doth give, or what is both your duty and advantage to forsake, and which is no gain for him to receive: Christ is not enriched by your hearts, by giving of your consent to him. 3. This is a Gospel mystrie, that *we are to buy without money and without price, & yet to buy with a price*, according to that *Prov. 17. 17.* there is a price put in the hands of fools, to buy wisdom, and what is the meaning of *to buy with price and to buy without price*? It is in this, though Christ be offered to you in the Gospel freely, ye must not sit down, but be active in cleaving with him; What is the price that Christ requireth of you? even this, that ye would forsake your souls, destroying idols, and that ye would forsake your

from evil ways, and take hold of the present opportunity for embracing him. And O ! cursed shall the heart be that will not embrace Christ ; O but to have him one hour in our arms , it were well worth a thousand Eternities of the enjoyment of all things offered here below : Ye would never open your breasts again to another lover , if once ye had him *between your breasts*. O but a sight of him that now is my eternal ravishment of all that are above , would we transport your hearts with joy, with delight, and admiration , above all expression ! Fourthly , there is the Gospel-mystery by which we would press you to embrace Christ ; *A Christian must buy Christ, and yet must have him freely*. Is there not an incon-  
 currence do you suppose , between buying and having , *truly*? But I would say this to clear it, Christ is both the seller, he is the wares, and he is the buyer; Christ presenteth himself unto your hearts, and he desireth to sell himself, and he perswadeth and freely enticeth you to buy him. I will tell you what Christ doth, he standeth without our hearts, and within our hearts ; he standeth without and knocketh by the door ; and he standeth within, and openeth by his spirit; Christ, he both commandeth, and he obeyeth; he doth within doors, and without doors, and all this he doth freely.

The second thing I shall say to perswade your hearts to take Christ freely promised and offered unto you, shall be this ; Will ye consider that there is a willingness in the heart of Christ to take you. I shall shew unto you these six things that speaketh out Christ of his willingness to receive you. First , Doth he not command you to come and receive him ? and if ye should multiply objections throughout eternity , why should not close with Christ , ye may cut them all off under with his knife , *This is his commandment : Come and doth he not command you , Mat. 11. 28. Come*



unto me all ye that labour. And, *Isai. 55. 1.* Every one that thirsteth come to the water. Secondly, doth regrave, and deeply resent it, that ye come. I think Christ never weeped so bitterly, that day when he weeped over *Jerusalem*, that they would not embrace him, *Luke 19. 41.* If thou, even thou, at least, in this thy day, had known these things that I have said long to thy peace: And *Joh. 5. 40.* Ye will not believe me that ye may have life. O what think ye can be the cause of this, that Christ should sorrow, because ye will not give up your hearts to him; doth he increase his pain when ye give him your hearts? No certainly, but he cannot endure that madness in you, that ye should forsake your only gain. Thirdly, when you do Christ a joyful turn, and make him glad? embrace him; This is clear, *Luke 15.* when he findeth the sheep that is going astray, he turneth rejoicing. Fourthly, I say no more, that you, would ye make all the persons of the blessed Trinity to rejoyce, would ye make all the Angels in Heaven to sing, would ye make all the Saints that are round about the Throne to exult for Joy? Give your hearts up to Christ, and close with him in the Covenant of promise; according to the word, *Song 6. last verse,* Return, return, O my love, return, return, that we may look upon thee. Four times that command is repeated, return, return, the great argument with which he backeth it, is, that all the persons of the Trinity may rejoyce, that they may look upon thee. Fourthly, consider but how he hath condescended to give himself at a very low rate, what will ye give for Christ? O sinners, what will ye give for him? would ye give the world for Christ? I will tell you what ye will get Christ for; ye will get him for a very look, *Isai. 45. 22.* Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth: And think ye not that of his matchless mercy, that the thirty three years suffi-

1. Christ, all the pains and tortoures of his heart, his second under the unsupportable wrath of an offended at ye will; the fruit of all that should be yours for a look, rather, as ye deny that to Christ; Oh do ye ever think to they will a more down-coming market? Yea, fifthly, doth even this speak an admirable willingness to have you, things thus to give you that look. It is impossible for these not closed eyes of ours, ever to give precious Christ a to be that, and therefore he hath promised, to give that to ye will that we may give to him, *Zech. 12. 10. They shall increase to me*, that very look ye are to get from Christ, & No censur it is within the compass of a promise. Lastly, you, it speaketh Christs willingness to receive & take you, y, Yet he doth not take the first refusal. O christians he his heart are now in Christ, if Christ had taken an hundred 5. 5. refusals from you, ye should never have been in Heaven, but he waiteth for an answer, and doth not take more at our first word, according to that word, *Song. 5. 2. He blew upon the drops of the morning, and my Angels with the dew of the night*: He was long knocking at her heart, & stayed a long time there patiently, suffering all the injuries he could meet with. And I with could only pose you, think ye that if on of the richest to you were suing a very poor woman, and she refused you so many times, would your proud hearts submit to take her; and yet how oftentimes hath the precious heart of Christ submitted to many affronts, and refusals that we have given him; I think if it were possible, christians would wink, when first they behold how Christ upon the day of their espousals; For, I suppose now there will be great dispute between shame and love, it will fire and confusion; shame will make you to close your eyes, because ye have oftentimes undervalued that will since, and yet love will not let you close them, determine will put you to look, though reflecting upon that your former ways, will make you blush and be ashamed.



Thirdly, to perswade you to receive Christ offer of his free promises, I shall but say these words and close, 1. Look to these excellent gifts Christ bringeth with him, he bringeth Justification with him, and is not that an excellent gift. He bringeth Sanctification with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth joy of the Holy Ghost with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth the love of God with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth patience under sufferings with him, and is not that an excellent gift? but why shall I name what he bringeth? He bringeth himself with all things, and what would ye have more? O, but one saving blink of his face, it would make your heart lay down your enmity that you have maintained long. 2. O Christian, that ye may close with Christ do but remember the happiness that ye will have in embracing him, I told you not long since, and now I put you in mind again: There is a sixfold crown which shall be put upon your head; Would you have long life? then come to Christ, and ye shall have a crown of eternal life: Would ye have glory? then come to Christ, and ye shall have a crown of glory: Would ye have knowledge of the mysteries of God? then come to Christ, and he shall crown you with knowledge; Would ye have an eternal felicity, an uninterrupted happiness? then come to Christ, and ye shall have an immortal crown; Would ye have holiness and sanctification? then come to Christ, and ye shall have a crown of righteousness: yea, he shall put a royal crown upon your head, a crown of Gold; and then that word shall be accomplished to the full, *Ezek. 9. 16.* *Then shall they be as the stone, and as a crown lifted up, and as an ensign upon the land.* what a day think ye will it be, when Christ shall put your crowns upon his hand, and shall put them upon those heads never to be removed again, here w

Christ is put to fight out that lamentation, *The crown is*  
*taken from our heads, woe unto us for we have sinned, but*  
*these gifts are shall be no more sin to make our crown to tot-*  
*ter.* 1. I must tell you, There is a fourfold suite of ap-  
 pel that ye shall be cloathed with ere long : ye are  
 now cloathed with *heaviness*, but then ye shall be  
 cloathed with the garments of *praise*; And did ye  
 know such a robe as that? Is it not a more excel-  
 lent robe, then the robes of Kings and Emperours in  
 Earth, to be cloathed with praises? Many of them  
 and shall be for ever cloathed with infamy and  
 shame. 2. Ye shall be cloathed with change of ray-  
 ment, and shall be brought unto the King *in rayment*  
*of needle work.* O poor Lass and poor Lade that sit-  
 teth upon the dung-hill, that knows not what it is  
 to have change of apparel; ye shall have it in that  
 day, when Christ shall solemnize the Marriage with  
 you, ye shall misken your self. O Christian, if ye  
 know your self never so well, ye will be forced to cry  
 out! *O, Is this I, is this I? that am now made perfect*  
*through his comeliness.* 3. Ye shall be cloathed with  
 the garments of *immortal glory*, ye that have your  
 foundation in the dust, and dwell in the houses of clay,  
 shall then be cloathed with these excellent robes of im-  
 mortality, and cloathed upon with your house from hea-  
 ven. And Lastly, ye shall be cloathed with the gar-  
 ment of the *spotless righteousness of Christ.* O such  
 a majestick walk as ye will have, when ye shall  
 have a scepter in one hand, and a palm in the other,  
 these robes put upon your back, and these crowns  
 upon your heads, and then shall be walking through  
 these streets that are paved with Gold. 4. I shall  
 tell you this word to think upon, that there are five  
 things that shall be your exercise in heaven; 1. Ye  
 shall be constantly taken up in wondering: If it be  
 presumption for us to think a little; What is  
 the exercise of Christ, and the Saints that are above,  
 we



we conceive it is this , Christ is wondering at  
 beauty, and they are wondering at his beauty, C  
 is looking upon them, and they upon him; and  
 not true , that if Christ be now ravished with o  
 our eyes, *Song 4. ver. 9.* much more shall he b  
 vished when both our eyes shall be given to him  
 shall eternally behold him, without going a who  
 after other lovers. 2. Ye shall be continually i  
 exercise of praise, joy and light shall be flowin  
 eternally ; ye shall then sweetly warble upon  
 Harps of God , and shall cry, *Hallelujah unto him*  
*Sitteth upon the Throne :* There shall be no di  
 there ; there is a sweet and beautiful harmo  
 mongst all these spiritual and heavenly Musicians  
 but to hear them, it were a Heaven, though we ha  
 that blessed lot as to sing with them. 3. Ye sh  
 continually taken up in the exercise of Love ;  
 is your predominant grace while ye are here ,  
 Love shall be your predominant grace when y  
 there. O! Is it not a mystery to take up these  
 emanations of Love and Delight , that shall pa  
 tween Christ and you ? ye shall be infolding C  
 and Christ shall be infolding you. 4. Ye sh  
 continually beholding him. I think it is hardly  
 sible for the Wife to remember her Husband in  
 ven , though she loved him as her own heart,  
 will all be taken up in beholding him that si  
 upon the Throne , they will be thinking i  
 low an object to be taken up with looking upo  
 other in these relations : all will be ravished b  
 ding him , and one another in him , and  
 him. O the blessed exercise of these that are  
 entered within that City , and within these g  
 whose Name is *Praise.* 5. Ye shall be contin  
 taken up in beholding , ye shall be always know  
 and yet never able to comprehend the endless m  
 ries and perfections of Jesus Christ. O such a s

is it not pleasant always to be studying Christ? and  
will not these things perswade you?  
And now but a word more to these that will not  
take this free offer: If ye will not imbrace Christ and  
take him, let me tell you, I would not be in the stead  
of that person for ten thousand worlds, if ye will not  
imbrace Christ, & take him for your portion, the stones  
of the wall of this house will bear witness against you,  
and they shall have a tongue to speak against you,  
that ye have been invited to take him, and would  
not: ere long that day is approaching, and draw-  
ing near, when the Atheists and refusers of Christ,  
they shall change their Faith, and they shall change  
their Love, they shall change their Fear, and they shall  
change their Joy, and they shall change their Mind,  
they shall change your Faith, ye that are refusers of  
Christ; for I know there are many that think they have  
closed with Christ, who never did close with him; that  
which shall flee away, and ye shall believe the contrary:  
they shall change your love, or at least your opinion of  
your love: ye think ye love Christ, but ye do not im-  
brace him; I will tell you what will be your exer-  
cise, and I can tell you nothing so terrible, Christ  
shall eternally hate you, and ye shall eternally hate  
Christ, there shall be a mutual hatred betwixt you  
two for evermore. O that dreadful word, Zech. II.  
My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.  
And ye shall change your fear, for now though ye  
fear not God, nor reverence man, yet the horreur of  
G O D shall make you shake as a leaf, and ye shall  
change your light and your judgement. Ye do now  
undervalue Christ, and think him of nothing worth;  
when Christ is presented unto you, there is no beau-  
ty why ye should desire him: But O think on that  
day when Christ shall sit down in the clouds, and  
ye shall see his beautiful face, every ray of which shall  
be



be able to captivate your hearts, if they were then capable to be ravished with the sight. O what will be your thoughts of him? and if the blessings of a crucified Saviour come not upon you, then the eternal, unsupportable vengeance of Christ shall light upon your heads, that would not condescend to take him: ye shall be cursed in your life, ye shall be cursed in your death, and ye shall be cursed after death; What say ye to it? are ye content to take him? ye might bless the day that ever ye were born, if ye could once come to close with Christ. Now to Him that hath the keys of the house of *David*, that can open your hearts to give him entry, we desire to give praise.

#### SERMON IV.

*2 Pet. 1. 4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**T**Here are three most glorious and excellent gifts that God hath bestowed upon man, there is that comprehensive gift of Heaven *Jesus Christ*, who is so called, *Job. 4. 10.* and sure such a gift as that ought in some sense to blind our eyes, and make us look upon all things that are below him, as nothing. The second royal Gift that the Lord hath given, is the precious promises of the everlasting Covenant, which are given to us thorow him: a Christian that is united unto him by the blood of Faith, he may write this above the head of every promise of the everlasting Covenant, *this is mine, and this is mine.* His third precious gift, is the gift of *Faith*, which is that grace that maketh use of the former two: & we conceive that our little making use of these three excellent gifts, is the great occasion and cause why these four most sad and lamentable evils have befallen us. 1. The evil of  
a si-

silent conscience, that though *we be profound to commit iniquity*, and *do love a reward under every green tree*, yet our conscience doth not speak, nor reprove us, and if at any time they do speak, yet there are some that are so possessed with a dumb and deaf spirit, they can neither hear what God doth speak, nor can they hear their conscience. 2. The evil of a fierce God, we know not the voice of our rod, and *who is he that hath appointed it?* God doth not now open our ears to Discipline, nor seal up our instruction. 3. There is that evil of *silent mercies*, the mercies that we receive of God, we understand not the language of them: are not our mercies Barbarians unto us, speaking to us in an unknown tongue? and yet we may say, there is not a rod, nor a mercy a Christian meets with, but it hath a voice, if we did understand it. And lastly, there is that evil which hath befallen us; and alace, this is the capstone of all, *a silent God*, who doth not hearken unto the voice of our cries, but turneth about the face of his Throne, *covering himself with a cloud in his anger*, so that our prayers cannot pass through. Alace, may not each Christian of this time cry out, *call me no more Naomi*, but *call me Mara*, because the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me. In short, I think there are these two things that may be our lamentation upon the high places of *Israel*. First, that we live without sight of God. And, secondly, that we live without sight of our selves, and all this, because we live without sight of these precious Gifts, Christ and his promises.

But now to the words, We told you, that in them there were these four things holden forth concerning the promises. 1. The Original and fountain of the promises, in that word, *whereby, or by whom*. 2. The properties of the promises, which we told you, were these four. The first was, that the promises were free, holden forth in that word, *they are given*; all



all the promises of the everlasting Covenant being the noble gifts of God. The second (of which) we are to speak at this time, is this, that the promises of the covenant, they are unchangeable, which is imported also in that word, *they are given*, the gifts of God being indeed without repentance; And as to this, 1. We shall prove the truth of the point : and for this end, consider that place, *Numb. 23. 19.* which was a part of *Balaams* song, *Hath he not spoken it, and will he not also do it? Hath he said it, and shall it not also come to pass?* and *Psal. 89. 34.* *I will not break my Covenant, nor alter the word that hath gone out of my mouth :* and the point is clear also, from the name that the promises getteth in Scripture, are they not called *the sure mercies of David*, *Isai. 55. 3.* and are they not sometimes in Scripture called *Truth*, as we may see from *Micah 7. 20.* Thirdly, The nature of the Covenant proveth it; in that it is called *an everlasting Covenant*, and sometimes a *Covenant of Salt*, because that Covenant is above the reach of alteration or putrification. And fourthly, It may be likewise shown from the constant experience that the Saints have had of the unchangeableness of the promises. This *Joshua* taketh notice of, *Chap. 23, 24.* where when he was a dying, *There hath not failed (saith he) one thing of all these good things that God hath spoken;* and he is so confident of this, that he is forced to repeat that word over again in that verse, and he taketh notice of it, *Josh. 24. 45.* where he hath that same expression again, *There hath not failed (saith he) one thing of all the good things that God hath spoken;* and this *Solomon*, he took notice of, *1 Kin. 8. 56.* *There hath not failed one thing that God hath spoken unto us by Moses,* and indeed, there is near six thousand years experience that preacheth this truth, *the promises are unchangeable*, so that we may now say, *The word of the Lord is tried as silver is purified*

tried in a furnace of earth hot seven times ; If there had been any falshood in the precious promises of the everlasting Covenant , six thousand years tryal should have brought it to light ; but doth not every one of the cloud of witnesses that have gone before us, leave this testimony upon record , *Faithful is he that hath promised, who will also do it, his promise is with the night and with the day, it can not be altered;* the ordinances of heaven continue to this day, much less can this Covenant of love be broken or altered, only we would have you taking this Caution by the way , that there are some conditional promises that God passeth unto his people, which in the depths of his spotless wisdom , he doth not accomplish unto these who never fulfil the condition ; such was that promise that he gave to the *Israelites* in the land of *Egypt*, of their possessing the land of *Canaan*, who yet died in the wilderness. And hence is that strange word , *Numb. 13. 34. Ye shall know my breach of promise, saith the Lord,* which is a word spoken after the manner of men, not importing any change of purpose in God, but only shewing, that because they did not believe , and so fulfil the condition of the promise, therefore it was not to be fulfilled personally to them.

The second thing that we shall speak to upon this, that the promises are unchangable, shall be to propose these six golden pillars and excellent foundations, upon which the unchangeableness of the promises is built. And the first of them is *the Omnipotency of God*, that there is nothing that he hath promised, but he is able to effectuate and to bring to pass ; Therefore, *2 Cor. 6. 18.* when God had been passing many excellent promises, he strengthneth their faith with this, *Thus saith the Lord God Almighty;* and no doubt, *where the word of this King is, there is power, and who can say unto him, what dost thou?* O misbeliever of the precious promises of the Covenant; be ashamed to  
cast



cast up your eyes to heaven above , or to the earth beneath; we think the Stars, the Sun, the Moon, and all the works of God, they may speak out that to you, do not misbelieve God , but trust in him , *that is wonderful in counsel , and excellent in working.* The second is , the wisdom and infinite counsel of God, he hath not only compleat ability to accomplish the promises that he hath given, but he hath the depths and treasures of knowledge , by which he hath contrived the way of the accomplishment of such a promise. Hence is that word, *2 Sam. 23. 5.* that the Covenant is *well ordered* , which speaketh out the wisdom of God ; and then that word is subjoyned , the Covenant *is sure*; yea, the Covenant of Grace is such a thing , that there is so much of the art of heaven, so much of infinite wisdom shining in it, that it is called the *Counsel of God*, *Heb. 6. 17.* *That ye might know the immutability of his counsel.* The third golden pillar, is *the infinite love of God*, that though there be nothing in us that can put him to accomplish the promises, yet he will take an argument from his own love, to make out such a promise to us; that there is sometimes (if not always) nothing in us, but that which may speak forth delays of the accomplishment of the promises; but when God can bring no argument from us, he can bring an argument from his own love , as *Deut. 7. 7, 8.* where giving a reason of the accomplishment of many promises, and of his Love to them, *I loved you*, saith he, *because I loved you*; there being no reason that can be given for love , but love. The fourth is, *The unchangeableness of the promiser* , that he is the same , yesterday , and to day , and for ever, and without all alteration and shadow of change : Hence ye may see, *Exod. 3. 14.* when God is repeating many precious promises unto *Moses* , He ( as it were ) strengtheneth *Moses* faith with this, *I am* faith

faith he, *that I am*, which we conceive to point forth the unchangeableness of God, that what he hath said, he will certainly accomplish in its own time, and though the vision do tarry, yet at last it shall speak. The fifth is, *the faithfulness of God*, and that he is one that cannot lie, but certainly will make out what he hath spoken. Love, it maketh the promises, the faithfulness and power of God accomplisheth the promises, and the infinite wisdom of God chooseth the most fit time for the performing of them. Hence it is said Psal. 119. 89, 90. *Thy word, O Lord, is for ever settled in heaven*, and the ground of it is in the following verse; *For thy faithfulness is unto all generations*. Hence you may see, that oftentimes when God is making promises to his own, he putteth to that word, *that speaketh in righteousness*, Isa. 45. and *Isai. 63.* O! must not the promises be unchangeable that are made by the Father, who is the God of truth? Must not the promises be unchangeable that are received and merited by the Son, that is Truth itself, and the faithful witness, and Amen? Must not the promises be unchangeable, that are applied by the Holy Ghost, that is the Spirit of Truth? And must not the promises be unchangeable, that are made known unto us by the Gospel, that is the word of Truth? Was there ever any who could leave that upon record of God, that he was unfaithful in the accomplishment of his promises. O what a clear sight of the faithfulness of God shall a Christian get, when he shall be standing upon the utmost line between time and Eternity, then he will see God faithful in accomplishing all his promises unto him from first to last. The last golden pillar is, *The Justice of God*; His justice, it now putteth him to accomplish his promises, mercy and righteousness have now kissed each other: hence is that word, 1 Joh. 1. 9. *He is just and faithful to forgive*; So that now the accomplishment of the pro-



promises , is not only an act of love, but it is an act of justice also ; We confess indeed, love and mercy maketh the promises, but justice and truth also putteth God to the accomplishment of them. Hence that word , Micah 7. 20. *To perform the truth to Jacob , and the mercy to Abraham.* Why is it mercy to Abraham, and it is truth to Jacob? It is in short this, because mercy made the promises to Abraham, but truth did accomplish the promises to Jacob ?

The third thing that we shall speak to from this That the promises are unchangeable, shall be, to press these six duties upon you from this point.

O Christians and Expectants of Heaven, who have Christ in you , the hope of Glory, rejoyce and be exceedingly glad that the promises are unchangeable. 1. This is a duty that is pressed from that ground Heb. 6. 18. *That by two immutable things we might have strong consolation:* There is exceeding much joy that may come to a Christian from this, that the promises shall be accomplished in their own time. We conceive that the word *unchangeable* , it is engraven upon the head of many a Christians mercies. Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of your promises? Is not *unchangeable* written upon the head of our blessedness? Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our enjoyment of God? That day is coming when we shall have *unchangeable* love , *unchangeable* enjoyment of God, and all things *unchangeable* : And we conceive that if these two were believed, the truth of the promises , and the unchangeableness of the promises, a Christian might walk through this valley of tears with joy , and comfort himself in hope :

The second duty we would press , is this, that you would surcease, and give over your disputings and carnal reasonings about the accomplishment of the promises, since the promises of God are unchangeable, ought not we with this to silence misbelief , and all

that blind humane reason can say: This is pressed, Heb. 6. 16. *An oath for confirmation, it is an end of all strife,* Gods confirming of his Covenant by an oath, it ought to cut short the disputings of misbelief; And here give me leave to point out a little these grounds, upon which it is that Christians doth so much dispute the accomplishment of the promises, and to let you see how all these grounds may be answered from these six pillars that were given of their unchangeableness.

The first is when dispensations seemeth to contradict the truth of the promises, the promise, it speaketh one thing, and dispensations seem to speak another, and this is the occasion that oftentimes a Christian crys out, *Doth his promise fail for evermore?* This is clear from the practice of David, 1 Sam. 27. 1. when dispensations were upon the top of the accomplishment, and truth of the promises, then misbelief it ariseth as a champion mighty to war, and cryeth out, *I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul:* And we conceive, that dispensations contradicting the truth of the promises, was the occasion of his speaking that word, Psal. 119. 11. *I said in my haste, all men are liars.* And I would only say to you that dispute the truth of the promises upon this account, that dispensations contradicteth them: Do but consider this; God in his way is not like unto you; Would ye know the time when the promises are nearest their accomplishment, it is then when we can least see that they are to be accomplished, the promises are never nearer their performance, then when we think that they are farthest off from it; And therefore let the faith of the omnipotency of God, uphold your spirit under such a debate, then let dispensations speak what they will; ye may answer all with this, *There is nothing too hard for him,* there is nothing too hard for the Lord. I grant this may try the strength of the strongest faith, yea, we find it hath made the best  
to



to stagger when they had no probabilities to tell them that the promises shall be accomplished, this was the ground of *Sarah's* misbelief, *Gen.* 18. 12. that when she heard that she should bear a son in her old age she laughed within her self, and did as it were, mock at such a promise; and this was the ground of *Moses's* misbelief, *Num.* 11. 21, 22. he did not see a probability that such a multitude should be fed with flesh, and therefore he did call in question the truth of that promise; this was the ground of the misbelief of that lord that is made mention of, *2 King.* 7. 2. this was the ground of *Zacharies's* misbelief, *Luke* 1. 20. But I would only say to you that do so much confusion with probability in the exercise of your faith, these two things. 1. There is nothing too hard for God, this was the very argument that God took to convince *Sarah*, in the 14. verse of that 18. Chapter, *Is there any thing too hard for God?* And, 2. Faith is never in native and spiritual exercise, till once probability contradict the truth of the promise, then faith, it is put upon the stage, then faith doth act; but as long as faith and probabilities think one thing, then the day of the tryal of the strength of faith is not yet come.

The second ground upon which Christians dispute the accomplishment of the promises, is their much disputing of their interest in God; sometimes a christian will believe a promise, & before the accomplishment of the promise come, their hope will be darkened, their interest in Christ will be obscured, and then they do quite their faith in adhering to the truth of that promise. These two are joyned together, want of the faith of our interest, and want of the faith of the accomplishment of the promise, as is clear from that word, *Psal.* 77. 8. *Is his mercy clean gone?* There is disputing of his interest, and presently this is subjoynd, *doth his promise fail for evermore?* Except a Christian can read his name in the ancient records of heaven

and can seal this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, it will be a hard, and a difficult task for him, if not impossible to believe the promises.

The fourth ground of a Christians disputing the truth of the promises, is, their mistaking the way how the promises are to be accomplished, there are some who suppose that when ever they close with a promise by faith, there is no more but to enter to the possession of such a promise; but do not mistake it, between your believing the promise, and the accomplishment of it, there may be sad and dark days intervening, according to that word in *Mark 10. 30.* where Christ, passing great promises to his Disciples, *thou, as it were doth add, do not mistake me, that ye shall have these promises without trouble and affliction, Ye shall receive (saith he) an hundred fold in this life with persecutions.* A Christian when he believeth the promises, he must resolve to have a winter before the spring time come, wherein the promise shall bud and flourish.

The fifth ground of a Christians disputing the truth of the promises, is, when the promises are long in their accomplishing. A Christian when first he meeteth with a promise, he will cry forth, *O believe*, but when time is taken for the accomplishment of it, then his faith beginneth to faint, and his hope beginneth to languish and give over; yea, sometimes Christians they fall into this fault, when they believe a promise, they fix a day for the accomplishment of it; which, if God do not keep, but go over; then they immediately cry forth, *what is my strength that I should wait? and what is my confidence that I should prolong my days?* This is clear in the practice of *Abraham*, where the promise of having a numerous seed being given to him, *Gen. 12. 2.* the long time before that promise was accomplished in part to him, was the occasion of his unbelief, that he vented, *Gen. 15. 3. O Lord, what*



*What wilt thou give me since I go childless. But ye must know that before the vision shall speak, there is an appointed time that ye must wait, according to 1 Pet. 5. 9, 10. After ye have suffered a while, then the promises shall be accomplished, and ye shall be made perfect.*

The sixth ground upon which Christians call in question the accomplishment of the promises, is, The consideration of the greatness of the thing that is promised, when they compare it with their own worth and deserving, then they begin to dispute, *O shall such a thing be, shall unworthy I, shall sinful I, shall self-damning I, shall I that am less then the least of his mercies; receive the accomplishment of such a mercy this we may suppose was one ground of Abraham's misbelief, Gen. 17. 17. when he cryed forth at the same time, when the Lord was giving him the excellent promise of an Isaac, O that Ishmael might live he thought an Isaac such an excellent mercy, that he could not without presumption, expect the accomplishment of that promise; and in Zech. 8. 6. this was the ground of their misbelief, which God doth sweetly obviate, If it be wonderful in the eyes of the remnant of his people in these dayes, shold it also be wonderful in mine eyes.*

The last ground upon which a Christian disputes the accomplishment of the promises, is, when in the time between their believing & the accomplishment of the promise, they fall into some gross iniquity, that maketh them exceedingly debate whether the promise shall be accomplished unto them; for since they have transgressed the Covenant of God, and have broken their purposes and resolutions, they cannot suppose God will abide faithful to them; and once accomplish his promise unto them; and the only way how to answer this dispute, is, to look to the faithfulness of God, & use that word, 2 Tim. 2. 13. *Though we be faithless, yet God doth abide faithful, he cannot deny himself.*

And now to shut up this second duty that we press from the unchangeableness of the promises ; I shall only say these two words unto you ; 1. Assure yourselves of this, that these accomplishments of the promises that come not through the lively exercise of Faith, doth lose much of their sweetness, much of their luster, and much of their advantage : sometimes a promise will be accomplished unto a Christian, when he hath not been much in the constant and lively exercise of Faith in believing such a promise; but then the disadvantages that attendeth such a one, are not easily expressed : how often may he cry out, *The Lord was in this place, and I was not aware* : how little of mercy doth he see in it ? how short is he in praises and rendering to the Lord according to the good he hath received ? how negligent in improving or keeping the mercy, and how loath to lay it out for God, when he liveth, *the Lord hath need of it* : and many things more of this kind, which may press us to be steadfast in believing. And, 2. O dispute less, and believe more, what profit shall you have of your disputings ? and would ye would produce all your strong arguments, why ye should not believe the promises, ye may overthrow them in this immense depth, *God is unchangeable*. Let me say but this further, there are three most remarkable changes in a Christian, in his making use of the promises : First, Sometime he will believe the promises, and make application of them, and ere many hours go about, he will misbelieve that promise, which presently he believed. Will not sometime a Christian in the morning cry out, *I am my beloveds*, *and my beloved is mine*, and ere twelve hours come, they will change their note, and cry out, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord* : Sometimes a Christian in the morning will cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved*, and ere many hours go about, he will change his note, and cry out,

*Then*



*Thou hast hid thy face from me, and I was troubled.*  
 Secondly ; Sometimes a promise will be to a Christian *sweeter then the honey and the honey comb* : Sometimes a Christian will die and live upon the promise; Sometimes the believing of a promise, will be to a Christian *as the valey of Achor for a door of hope*, that will make him to sing; and yet ere many days go about, he may come to that same very promise , and it will prove tasteless to him as the *white of an egg*; so that he may cry out, *O that it were with me, as in months past, as in the ancient times* : And O where is the sweetness that I found in such a promise; O, it is gone, it is gone and I am left desolate. Thirdly, Sometimes when a Christian will be believing such a promise, and resting upon it, he will (through the Spirit of the Lord) have much light and clearness in that promise, he will take up the *deep things of God* that shineth therein: and another time he may come to that same promise, and it may be dark to him , so that his light hath evaporated : and sometimes the joy of a Christian in the promise will be gone, when his light that he had in it, may remain with him. A Christian may come to the promise, and find his ancient light, yet not his ancient joy nor his ancient delight. Therefore, if ye would have the promises always sweet unto you, pray over them pray that God might breathe upon such a promise and make it lively unto you.

The third thing that we would press upon you from the unchangeableness of the promise ; is this which by proportion ye may gather even from this that the threatnings of God are *unchangeable* ; the two are conjoynd; yea, *Josuah* seemeth to infer the unchangeableness of the threatnings from the unchangeableness of the promises , *Chap. 23. 14.* compared with *vers. 15.* and these two are conjoynd *Zech. 8. 14, 15.* *That as I thought to punish you , and it hath come to pass , so I have thought to build you*

it shall come to pass. And I would from this, de-  
you to stand in aw, lest you come under the lash  
unchangeable threatnings of God; for know that  
God is unchangeable in the promises, and there  
not one word in all the everlasting Covenant that  
shall not be accomplished; so likewise know, there is  
a curse in all the Book of the Covenant, but it shall  
be accomplished in its time: And know this likewise,  
that the day is coming when that sad word, that is in  
7. 12. shall be accomplished, *I will chastise them*  
*their congregation hath heard.* And, O ye that live  
at this place, if all the threatnings that your Congre-  
gations hath heard, shall be accomplished in their  
time, ye may take up the last words of *Balaams* song,  
*Who shall live when God shall do these things?*  
And therefore, since the threatnings of God are un-  
changeable, as also the promises, life and death is set  
before you: and either ye shall be the object of the  
changeable threatnings of God; or ye must be the  
object of the unchangeable promises of God: And  
therefore, I would from this charge you, that as you  
would not be helpful to the destruction of your own  
mortal souls, you would not undervalue the threat-  
nings that ye hear in your congregations, since there  
was declaration past, that the threatnings in your con-  
gregations shall be accomplished.

Now there is that fourth duty that we would press  
on you from this, that the promises are unchange-  
able, have an unchangeable love to the *Promiser*; let  
this commend the *Promiser*; let this constrain your  
heart to delight in the *Promiser*. O what a blessed  
dispensation of love is this, that an unchangeable God  
should make unchangeable promises unto changeable  
creatures. If the promises of the covenant of grace  
were as changeable in their nature, as we are change-  
able, there should not one of us go to Heaven; but  
know it is the blessed design of love, and it hath been



a blessed practice of the infinite wisdom of God, when he hath to do with changeable creatures, he give them unchangeable promises. And I would invite you again, that you would come near and embrace this *unchangeable Promiser*; I shall speak five words that may perswade you. 1. Christ is easily to be gotten if ye wil but take him, ye wil get Christ if you will but hear, yea, for one listning of your ear to his voice ye shall get him; according to that word *Is. 55. 31. hear, And what of that? and your souls shall live;* is not this to get Christ at an easie rate? and as we spake before, ye will get Christ for a look, and not that an easie rate? *Is. 45. 22. Look unto me and be saved;* Have ye a desire to take Christ, ye shall get him for that desire; according to that word, *Is. 55. 1. Ho every one that thirsteth let him come, and he that will let him come:* Will ye but consent to take him, ye shall have him, and what can ye have at a lower rate then this? shall never your curious hands take the pen and put to your name to the blessed contract of Marriage? shall never these curious hearts of yours cry forth, *Even so I take Him,* and promise to live to him, and to die to him. O stranger will ye not do it? upon what terms would the world have Christ, is it possible to have him without a consent to take him? Oh, if ye would but open to him he would condescend to come in into you, and to dwell with you, and ye with him; do ye but stir to open Christ hath the Keys in his own hand, and he will help you to open. O what if Christ, the precious Gem of Heaven, the eternal admiration of Angels, the branch of Righteousness shall be despised, being offered upon so easie terms, then cursed eternally shall that person that thus undervalueth Christ, it had been better for him that he had never been born; cursed shall ye be in your birth, and in your life, and in your death; all the curses of the persons of the

ity will light upon you, yea, believe it; O Wife that hath a believing Husband, in the day that the great sentence of eternal excommunication from the presence of the Lord, shall be past against the undervalueers of Christ, a believing Husband will say Amen to that sentence, even to his wife that did thus undervalue that Noble Plant of Renown; and the wife upon the other part, will say with hearty consent, amen to that sentence against the unbelieving Husband, and the Father to the Son, and the Son to the Father.

Now there is this fifth duty that we would press upon you from this, That the promises are unchangeable, that ye would be perswaded to make the promises your portion and your inheritance; What can ye want that will choise the promises for your portion? I know, our cursed eyes doth not love to make invisible promises, and that invisible crown, and an invisible God our portion, we look to walk by sight, not by faith. But oh, if you knew once what it were to claim a relation to Christ! did ye once know what it were to have but Christ a moment between our breasts, ye would cry forth, O! *who would not love him who is the King of Saints?* who would not be content to quite all things that they might get Christ that noble Pearl of price?

And there is this last duty that we would press upon you from this, that the promises are *unchangeable*; Read a lecture from this, O Christian, even your misbelief; God hath confirmed his everlasting Covenant with *an oath*, with the *Bloud of his Son*, by the two great broad Seals of Heaven, *the Sacrament of Baptism* and *the Lords Supper*; and what doth all these confirmations speak but our dreadful misbelief, and that we know not what it is to be resting on a naked word of promise. I shall say no more, but desire that ye would consider and take notice of these three; First, Ye have been solemnly, and often invited by the Am-



balladors of Christ to close with him , and to  
 him for your Husband and your Lord , and will  
 consider presently, that all the Angels in Heaven,  
 all that are about the Throne, and the three most  
 rious, most blessed Persons of the Trinity, that  
 are witnesses, and shal be to your dissent, and are th  
 not many here whose hearts could never be brou  
 up to give a hearty consent to close with Christ, th  
 the great Promiser , and who hath laid all the bo  
 that Heaven or Earth could contrive to gain sinn  
 hearts to himself: O precious Christ, what could  
 do to perswade us to love him , which he hath  
 done ; and yet that may be your name, which is  
*Ephes. 2. 2. Children of disobedience.* Or as the w  
 is, Children of *Imperswasion* , we cannot be persw  
 ed. Secondly , I fear if Christ himself would co  
 from Heaven and invite you, and say, here am I,  
 brace me , there are some here who would close  
 only their eyes, but their ears, they would close th  
 eyes, lest the beauty of Christ should allure them, t  
 would close their cursed ears, lest they should be g  
 ed, and captivate by the sweet enchanting voice  
 that blessed Charmer, when he should charm so w  
 ly. And, lastly, will thou tell me, O Christian  
 expectant of Heaven, what a day shall it be when  
 the unchangeable promises of God shall be acco  
 plished? What a day shall it be when that promise  
 be accomplished, *ye shall see him as he is?* What a  
 shall it be when that promise shall be accomplish  
*Ye shall be made like unto him?* What a day shall it  
 when that promise shall be accomplished , *Ye sh  
 know as ye are known?* O! are ye not longing for  
 day of the full accomplishment of the precious p  
 mises of God , when ye shall sit down and com  
 your selves in the eternal and unspeakable fruition  
 them ? O let us long and wait till the day shall  
 when the voice shall be heard in Heaven, that the

series of God are finished, till the day when that voice shall be heard in Heaven, Behold, the Bride-groom cometh, go ye out to meet him. O how unwilling are we to leave a world. And how badly would we take up our rest on this side of Jordan. I think if this were the night that that blessed voice were to be heard in Heaven, Behold the Bride-groom cometh, go ye out to meet him : come, if not many of the Christians. (that are so indeed) in this time, would cry forth, O spare a little that we may recover strength, before we go hence and shall be no more. Are ye not longing to bring the King over Jordan, and to bring him home to your self, and to have your heart brought home to him ? O blessed, blessed are those that are above, Is not the voice of these that shout for victory, heard amongst them ? Is not the voice of these that sing for joy, heard among them ? Job doth not now any more complain, why dost thou make me to possess the iniquities of my youth, and setteth a print upon my heels ? David doth now no more complain, why doth thy promise fail for evermore ? but rather doth sweetly sing, How is thy promise fulfilled for evermore ? Heman doth now no more complain, while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted : but rather cry out, while I feel thy comforts, I am ravished. The voice of mourning is now sweetly gone away, and the voice of Hallelujah and of eternal praising of him that sitteth upon the throne, is now heard in the place of it : O, such a day that shall never admit of a following night. Now to him that is upon his way, that will come, and shall come, and shall not tarry, we desire to give praise.



## SERMON V.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**T**Here are three cardinal and excellent Graces that are exercised and taken up with the precious promises, there is the excellent grace of Faith, that believeth the truth and the goodness of the promise; there is the precious grace of Hope, that with Patience waiteth for the accomplishment of the promise and doth stay until the vision speak: and that noble grace of Love, that loveth the thing that is promised and taketh exceeding much delight in the Promise. If we may be allowed to speak so, we think that these strange revolutions and times we live in, are another *Ecclesiastes*, which doth fully preach forth the vanity and emptiness of all things that are below God; and we do indeed conceive, that it is the great design of God, in the darkning of our pleasant things, and in marking every gourd to wither, under the shadow which we use to repose our self, and in famishing the gods of the earth, to bring his own to delight themselves in this invisible treasure; the promises of the everlasting Covenant, and in him who is the substance of them; and that since all things else are declared to be vanity, we might choose these as our own portion for ever.

At the last occasion that we spake upon these words we were speaking unto the properties of the promise; and we told you that there were four of them holden forth; 1. *The freedom of the promises.* 2. *The unchangeableness of the promises*, of which two we have spoken unto you; and now there remaineth other two to be spoken to, to wit, that the promises are exceeding great, & that they are exceeding precious, a sweet

excellent, though a rare conjunction, greatness  
 and goodness here kissing one another, preciousness  
 and highness linked together by the bond of Union ;  
 and we shall speak unto these two properties to-  
 gether, and shall clear a little this thing, in what re-  
 spects the promises of the Covenant, may be called  
 exceeding great and precious ; and we conceive in  
 respect, they may be called so in these eight re-  
 spects; 1. They are exceeding great, in respect of  
 some great price that was laid down to purchase them,  
 and Peter not being a promise of the everlasting Cove-  
 nant above the head of which this may not be in-  
 novated in great letters, *here is the price and purchase*  
*in his blood*; and no doubt this ought highly to commend  
 the promises, that are bought at so infinite a rate.  
 Must they not be great and precious things, that so  
 much a Merchant did lay down so infinite a treasure  
 for the purchasing of them. 2. They may be called ex-  
 ceeding great and precious, in respect of these great  
 and precious things that are promised in them. Is not  
 eternal life a great thing, and this within the bosome of  
 the promise? Is not Heaven, an eternal enjoyment of  
 God a great and precious thing? & yet this lyeth with-  
 in the bosome of a promise ; Is not the knowing of  
 God as he is, our perfect conformity with God, our  
 victory over Idols, great and excellent things? and  
 all these are treasured up in the promises. 3. They  
 may be called exceeding great and precious in re-  
 spect of the great advantage that redounds to a Chri-  
 stian through the enjoyment of them: the promises of  
 the everlasting Covenant, (if so we may speak) are the  
 means that draws the draughts and lineaments of  
 the image of Christ upon the soul, it is the promises  
 of the everlasting Covenant, by which *we are changed*  
*from glory to glory, as it were by the spirit of the Lord,*  
 and as Peter doth here speak, the promises are such  
 things, whereby we are made *partakers of the divi-*



*nature.* 4. They may be called exceeding precious in respect of that near relation that they have unto Jesus Christ; what are all the promises of the covenant of Grace? are they not streams and rivolets that flow from Jesus Christ? Christ is the fountain out of which all these promises do spring; and can this fountain be sweet in it self, send forth any bitter waters? may they not be precious things that have such a noble odour and scent? as the streams of love flowing out from the Father to the Son, & from him unto us, as the pouring out of the ointment upon the head of *Aaron* which ran down the head unto the skirts of his garments. 5. They may be called exceeding precious promises, in respect that they, or rather Christ in them are the object of precious faith; what is the meat upon which faith doth feed? Is it not upon the promises of the covenant and Christ the kernel of them; what are these things that faith taketh so much delight in, and is supported by? is it not the promises of the Covenant. 6. They may be called exceeding precious, in that they are the things that guideth and leadeth us to precious Christ. There is not a promise within the Book of the covenant, but, as it were, it cryeth forth with a loud voice, O come to Christ; the promises are indeed the steps that leadeth us unto the house where Christ doth dwell, & there is no access unto Jesus Christ, but by a promise. Christ is to be found there, for he dwells within the bounds of the everlasting covenant, & there he will tryst with his people, and be found of them. And 7. They may be called exceeding precious, in respect that the Saints have found such sweetness, and such unspeakable delight in the promises. Did not *David* find a great sweetness in the promises, when he cryeth forth, *The words of my mouth are better unto me, than thousands of gold and silver*; Did he not find much sweetness in the promises, when he was constrained to cry out, *Thy Law is sweeter unto me, than* the

the honey and the honey comb; David in a manner, was put to a nonplus, to find out any suitable simile and significant resemblance, to point out the sweetness of the promises, though we may see the Christians of this time in a spiritual fever, they have lost their spiritual taste, so that they may say, if we may allude unto that word, 2 Sam. 19. 25. *I am this day fourscore years old, and cannot discern between good and evil, can thy servant taste what eat, or what I drink.* They know not what it is to be overcome with the sweetness that is to be found in these excellent streams of divine consolation. Lastly, the promises may be called exceeding precious, in that the Saints have a high and matchless account of them: Hence that word *deere* rendered *precious*, may likewise be rendered *Honourable*, which speaketh forth that there is nothing that hath so much of the esteem of a Christian as the promises. Would ye put wisdom, or riches, or honour, or what ye will in the ballance with the promises, they would cry forth, what should I profit to gain all these, if I lose the promises? We shall say no more of this, but that the promises are indeed that apple, the biting of which would make us in some respect, (and in humility be it spoken) *as God, knowing good and evil*: The promises are these things that doth elevate the soul unto a divine conformity with God. And, wish, that this might be the fruit of them, the promises are as cords let down to souls sinking in the *myrie* *Amay*; and in the horrible pit: do but lay hold upon them, and ye shall undoubtedly be drawn up, and ye shall *plant your feet upon the rock, and order all your goings.*

Now we come to speak of the third thing in the words: which is the advantage and unspeakable gain that floweth to a Christian through the promises, holden forth in these words, *That by him ye might be made partakers of the divine nature*; which words



doth not hold forth that there is any substance or change of our natures unto the Essence of God ; but only it holds forth this, that the soul that is taken in believing of the promises , they arise unto a likeness and conformity to him in Holiness, Wisdom and Righteousness. And as to these advantages that come to a Christian through the promises, 1. We must lay this for a ground, that the fruit of all cometh to him through believing the promises, and in making application of them.

And the first is, That they do exceedingly help and promote that excellent necessary work of mortification : this is clear from the words of the Text ; Likewise from 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit , perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.* And the influence that the promises have upon Sanctification, may be shown unto you in these three. First , They lay upon a Christian a divine bond and obligation to study holiness, that since Christ hath manifested and testified his respects unto us , in so ample and large a way, as to give us such precious promises, we ought to endeavour to study holiness , which is that great reward of Love that he seeketh from us for all things that he hath bestowed , and we receive , and this is the meaning of that , 2 Cor. 7. Secondly , The strength and furniture of a Christian for fulfilling and accomplishing of the work of Sanctification, lieth within the promises: Are not the promises of God unto a Christian , as *Sampsons* locks, which their great strength doth lye? and if once they cut themselves off from the promises, through misbelief, their strength doth decay, & they become as other men. Where must the Christian go to for strength? Is it not to the promises : is it not to the Name of the Lord ? yea, this is the strength of a Christian to which he must resort continually. And , This

ly, the promises of God they hold forth that unspeakable reward that attendeth that Christian that shall study holiness. There are several promises of the everlasting Covenant, that cryeth forth to the Christian, to him that overcometh wil this promise be accomplished, to him that overcometh wil this truth be fulfilled, and this doth exceedingly provoke a Christian to wrestle with all his discouragements he meeteth with in the way, he burieth all his anxieties within the circle of his immortal Crown, which he hopeth for, and seeth in the promise, and his hope maketh him dispense with his wants, his expectation maketh him overcome his fears, and his looked for joy, maketh him to dispense with his sorrows.

The second advantage, is, That the faith of the promises do help a Christian to a spiritual and heavenly performance of the duty of prayer, and wil maketh him delight in the performance of it: this is clear from 2 Sam. 7. 27. where David believing the promises, it is subjoynd, *He found in his heart to pray that prayer unto God*; and if any will look into the words of that prayer, they will see them running in a Heavenly and spiritual strain, speaking of one much acquainted with God, and under most high and majestick apprehensions of his Glory; and clear also, Psal. 119. 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cryed; & as if David had said, would you know what made me thus fervent, diligent in prayer, It was that, I hoped in his Word; and hence is, that he hath so many prayers in that Psalm, all were occasioned through the faith of the promises, as for instance, when he cryed forth, *Quicken me according to thy word, be merciful unto me according to thy word*. We conceive the faith of the promises helpeth Christian in his prayer to these four divine ingredients of that duty. 1. It maketh him to pray with faith: when once he buildeth his prayer upon the promise, then*



then he ventureth his prayer with much confidence of hope, according to that word, *Psa. 65. 3.* where we may see a man believing, & praying when he is believing, and expressing his confidence most strangely in these words, *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away,* it is not said, *thou wilt purge them away* or we desire that thou should purge them away, but *thou shalt*, which speaketh forth both the confidence of faith, and the boldness of faith. A Christian that believeth the promises, he can take the promise by his hand, and present it unto God, and say, fulfil thy promise, since thou wilt not deny thy Name, but art faithful. 2. It maketh a Christian pray with much humility, for when he doth understand that there is nothing that he hath but it is the fruit, & accomplishment of a promise, he doth not boast as those that have received, but walketh humbly under his enjoyment: this is clear, *Gen. 31. 10.* where we may see *Jacob* speaking to God with much humility, & in the ninth verse he is speaking to God in much Faith. And, 3. It maketh a Christian pray with much love: would ye know the great ground that we are so remiss in the exercise of love in prayer, it is because we build not our prayer upon the promises. And, 4. It helpeth a Christian pray with much fervency; when was it that *David* cried to God? was it not when he was believing the promise that was past to him of old, we would not play with God with such remissness, if we did believe the promises that are within the Covenant.

The third advantage is, That the faith of the promises doth sometimes uphold a Christian under spiritual disersions and tentations. Is it not certain that sometimes he hath been ready to draw that conclusion, *I am cast out of his sight, and shall no more behold him in the land of the living?* when a promise that hath been born in upon his spirit, hath supported him and made him to change his song, and to inv

is conclusion. This is clear from *Psal. 94. 18.* when he said, *my foot slippeth*, there is the conclusion of misbelief and despair, yet thy mercy, O Lord, *did hold me up*, there is the gate at which Faith doth bring us in consolation, not from by-gone experiences only; but certainly from that which he found in some precious promises that was born in upon his spirit: Many excellent cords of love hath Christ let down unto the soul, when they have been going down into the depths, and the weeds have been wrapt about their heads: it is clear likewise from *Psal. 119. 81.* *My soul fainteth for thy salvation*: as if David had said, I am in hazard to give over my hope & to break my confidence: And would ye know what was it that supported me under such an estate, I hoped in thy word, Hath not this oftentimes been the song of a christian in their darkest night, *In the multitude of my thoughts withheld in me, thy comforts do delight my soul*: Faith will see a morning approaching in the time of the greatest trouble, and no doubt that promise that upholdeth a christian in their doubting and most misbelieving condition, the lively impressions of that promise will remain a long time; and when first it is born in upon their spirits, they will see no small love shining forth in carving out such a promise to suit with such a Providence as they are (it may be) meeting with for the time.

The fourth advantage in believing the promise, is, that thereby we have an excellent help to patience, and divine submission under our saddest outward afflictions: this is clear from *Psal. 37. 13.* *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living*: and from *Psal. 119. 49, 50.* where David telling his exercise in the 49. I hope, saith he, *in thy word*, immediately he subjoyned; *This is my comfort in mine afflictions*, as if he had said, if I had not had the promises to be my comforters



forters, I had sit alone and kept silence, & should have remained without comfort in the day of my adversity and verse 92. *unless thy law had been my delight, I should have perished in mine afflictions;* & we conceive short, the influences which Faith upon the promises hath upon the patient bearing of the cross, may be shewn unto you in these two particulars; First, faith it is an excellent Prophet, that always prophesieth unto us good things, would ye enquire at faith at your midnight of affliction, what is its opinion of God and of your own estate; Faith would sweetly resolve you thus, *Wait on God, for I shall yet praise him for the healing of his countenance.* Faith knoweth not what it is to have a wrong construction of God; and therefore it is the noble interpreter of a Christians cross. If sense, reason and misbelief interpret your cross, they will make you cry out unto God, *Why art thou become unto me as an enemy, or as a liar, & as waters that fail?* but if faith, that noble interpreter do interpret your crosses, it will make you cry out, *I know the thoughts of his heart, that they are thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give me an expected end.* Faith letteth a Christian see a blessed outgate and issue of all the sad dispensations that he meeteth with. Faith, that is its divinity; I sow in tears, but I reap in joy, *weeping it may be at the evening, faith Faith, but joy shall come in the morning.* Secondly, it affordeth unto a christian such soul refreshing consolation in the midst of their afflictions, that in a manner they forget their sorrows, *as waters that pass away;* this David doth divinely assert, in Psa. 119. 50. *This is my comfort in affliction:* The faith of the promises are indeed that tree, which being cast into our waters of Marah, they will make them immediatly become sweet.

The fifth advantage is, that the faith of the promises doth help a christian to a greater distance with the world, and to live as a pilgrim, as is clear from Heb. 12. 13. where these two are sweetly linked together

together, there is the embracing of the promises by  
 faith, and confessing, *that they were strangers, and pil-*  
*grims here on earth.* And we shall show the influence  
 that faith hath upon this, in these three. 1. It maketh  
 christian see the end of all perfection here, and that  
 there is nothing within the Glob of the world, that is  
 not vanity and vexation of spirit. Faith is that pro-  
 spect through which a Christian hath most clear dis-  
 coveries of the vanity of all things, and this doth ex-  
 ceedingly help him to live as a pilgrim. 2. It letteth  
 Christian see the endless perfections of heaven, and  
 bringeth it within sight of the immense and everlast-  
 ing hope, and this maketh him to live as a pilgrim, &  
 to declare plainly that he *seeketh a cuntry.* And,  
 It doth exceedingly help him forward in that blef-  
 sed work, of weaning of affections from all things  
 that are here; would ye know where a believers heart  
 is? it is in heaven; Would ye know where his thoughts  
 are? they are in heaven; Would ye know where his  
 conversation is? it is in Heaven, Would ye know  
 where his hope is? It is in Heaven; his treasure is in  
 Heaven, and therefore his heart and conversation is  
 there, *And Christ in him is the hope of glory;* and in-  
 deed, more faith of the promises would constrain us  
 all to subscribe that *Confession of Faith*, that is in  
 Heb. 11. 13.

The sixth advantage that attendeth the believing  
 of the promises, is, that it is the mother of much spi-  
 ritual joy and divine consolation, and maketh a Chri-  
 stian to be much in the exercise of praise, this is clear  
 from Psal. 71. 14. *But I will hope continually,* and  
 then immediatly is subjoyned, *And will yet praise him*  
*more and more,* as likewise from Rom. 15. 13. and from  
 1 Pet. 1. 8. If a man would have his way to heaven  
 made pleasant, and while they are sitting by the ri-  
 vers of *Babel*, would be admitted to *sing one of the*  
*songs of Zion*; then ought they to believe the pro-  
 mises,



mises, and choise them as their heritage for ever: and then he may sing in hope, and praise in expectation though he have but little in hand for the present: indeed when he looketh to his possession, there will not be so much matter of rejoicing, but when he looketh upon his hopes and his expectations, he may be constrained to cry forth, *Awake up, O my Glory, I myself will awake early.*

The seventh advantage is, That the faith of the promises, is a notable mean to attain unto spiritual life: this is clear from 38. 16. *By all these things, saith Ezekiah, do men live (speaking of the promises) and all these things is the life of my spirit.* As likewise from Psa. 119. 50. *Thy words, saith David hath quickened me.* O what spiritual and divine life doth attend the Christian that is much in the exercise of faith upon the promises: and what is the great occasion that our hearts are oftentimes dying within us like a stone and we are like unto those that are free among the dead? Is it not because we do not make use of the promises?

Eighthly, There is that advantage, that faith of the promises it maketh a Christian have an esteem of the thing that is promised. What is the reason that we write this above the head of the great things of the everlasting covenant, this is a *Zoar*, a little one? Is it not because we do not believe? great things sometimes to us have no beauty, and there is no comeliness that appeareth in them why they should be desired but if we had so much faith as a grain of mustard seed we would cry forth, How excellent are these things that are purchased to the saints, and how eternally are they made up, that have a right but of one line of the everlasting Covenant, *that is well ordered in all things and sure.*

And ninthly, The faith of the promises is the door at which the accomplishment of the promises doth

enter in: according to that word, *Luke 1. 45. Blessed are they that believe, for there shall be a performance of these things that are spoken of the Lord unto them.* If we were more in waiting for the accomplishment of the promises, *The vision should speak and should not tarry*; And no doubt a mercy coming to us as the fruit and performance of a promise, will make it an exceeding refreshful thing; When a Christian getteth leave to sing that song which is in *Is. 25. 9. Lo this is our God we have waited for him, and he will come and save us,* and when a mercy is the fruit and accomplishment of the promise, there is a beautiful lustre and dye upon that mercy, which no art could set on, but only the finger of the love of God. The smallest mercy then becometh a matchless mystery of love, and the most matchless mysteries of Love without the exercise of Faith, they become as things that are contemptible in our eyes, and we do not value nor praise them. Faith maketh our thoughts to ascend, and unbelief makes our thoughts to descend, in relation to the mercies of heaven.

Lastly, Besides all these advantages, we have these two mentioned in the Text, 1. That by them we are made partakers of the divine nature, & are brought up into that blessed conformity with God, which we had lost in the fall. 2. That by them we escape the corruption in the world through lust. I intend not particularly to open up the nature of these things at this time, because I am only to speak to the exercise of faith in the promises. But O what excellent mercies are these, to get on the beauty of the Image of God, & to get off these ugly defilements which were the image of Satan upon our souls. O how should this commend the promises unto us, that by faith in them we do all *behold with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Now



Now that which secondly, we shall speak to, shall be the advantages that results to a Christian from spiritual observation of the Lords accomplishing his promises ; for here ye see in the text , the Apostle maketh an observation of these excellent things that are the fruit of these precious promises , when they are accomplished. And the first advantage is, That it stampeth the soul of a believer with most divine impressions of love, this is clear, *Is. 38. 15.* where *Hezekiah* cryeth out, *what shall I say, he hath spoken it himself, and hath done it,* being as it were, astonished and overcome with the apprehensions of the condescendency of God, he is put to a nonplus, and to, *what shall I say, Psal. 41. 8, 9.* As we have heard, (saith David) so have we seen in the City of the Lord of hosts, that is according to his promise, we have had suitable performance ; and he subjoyneth, *verse 9.* that which was both their exercise and their advantage, *we have thought of thy loving kindness, O God in the midst of the temple,* as it were, the observation of the performance of the promise, made their thoughts wholly to be taken up with the love of God: and no doubt, there is more love in performing one promise, then eternity were sufficient to make a comentary upon. It is one wonder of condescendency, that God should oblige and bind himself to us by promises: and another depth of wonderful love that he should perform these bonds and answer his words with performance.

The second advantage is, that the observing of accomplishment of promises doth bring into the soul new discoveries of God ; this is clear, *Exod. 6.* where God thus speaketh to *Moses*, *I was known* (saith he) *unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of the Almighty, but by the name of Jehovah was I not known to them,* that is , by the name of giving an accomplishment unto my promises , the Name was not discovered unto them , but should be made

made known unto their posterity, in the day when his promises shall pass into performances, and hence it is also, that when the Lord is speaking of the accomplishment of great promises, he doth so often in the Scripture subjoyn that word, *Ye shall know that I am Jehovah, or the Lord*, *Isai. 49. 23. 52. and 60. 16.* and indeed we daily find it so, for, is not every accomplishment of a promise, a new discovery of the wisdom of God, that shineth in the suitable tyming of the accomplishment of a promise? is not every accomplishment of a promise a new discovery of the faithfulness of God, that he will not alter that which hath gone out of his mouth: and is not every performance of the promise a new discovery of the love of God, that he desireth to magnifie his mercies above al his works and a new discovery of the power and omnipotency of God, that can bring forth the performance of his promise, notwithstanding of all the things that are in the way, yea, make things that are not to be, and bringeth to nought things that are.

The third advantage is, That it helpeth a Christian to have high apprehensions, and majestick uptakings of God; This is clear, *1 Tim. 1. 15.* compared with verse 17, where Paul closing with that promise, *That Christ came in the world to save sinners*, and beholding the accomplishment of it, in himself, his heart (as it were) is elevated within him, and he cryeth forth, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisable, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen.* There is an Emphasis in that word, *Now*; as if Paul had said, I could never praise and extoll him till now, and I am so much bound to Christ that I will not delay this exercise one moment, now I will bless him, and it is clear from *Micah 7. 18.* where the accomplishment of the promises that are there, made the Church cry out, *Who is like unto thee?* he became matchless unto them, through



through the performance of the promises. And so conceive that these who are much in spiritual observation of the performance of the promises, they will see precious draughts of the Majesty of God engraven upon them ; so that they will be constrained to cry out, that he above is mighty, that his Name is Jehovah and in him is everlasting strength, upon which we ought to rely in our greatest straits.

The fourth advantage is, The observation of the accomplishment of the promises will help a Christian when he is redacted unto new straits, to be much in the exercise of Faith upon God ; his former experience will produce hope in his soul ; for there is no discovery of the faithfulness of God , but by a voice, and cryeth out, *O believe him* who is able to give a clear being unto his word : This is clear from Ps. 56. at the close , *Thou hast delivered my soul from death*, saith David, and then he subjoyneth, *Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?* that is, I am certainly perswaded, thou wilt likewise perform that word unto me, and from Ps. 37. 2. 3. he giveth that title unto God, ver. 2. that he performeth all things for his people and then he doth subjoyn, *He shall send from heaven and save me*; and (by the way) the soul that can give God that title and stile, that he performeth all things for his people that soul must of necessity be in a choice and excellent state; And the point is likewise clear, from 2 Cor. 10. where Paul saith, *God hath delivered me, and he will yet deliver me*, and from hence he draweth that conclusion of Faith, *And he will yet deliver me*; We conclude sometimes our former experience of the faithfulness of God , they do not support the faith when we are redacted unto new difficulties, which is either occasioned through the greatness of the straits that we are now put to, (in our apprehensions) above that which we were put to before : so that though God did do

ver us when we were running with foot-men, yet we have no faith to believe that he shall deliver us when we are about to contend with horses; or else it is, through the unfaithfulness of our walk, in not answering the precious dispensations of Christ, in accomplishment of his promises, for this maketh us that we cannot with boldness make use of his Word when we are brought unto a new strait, a guilty conscience is the mother of misbelief.

The fifth advantage is. The accomplishment of the promises doth occasion much spiritual joy, and rejoicing unto his own. We told you, the giving of the promises occasioneth joy, and when the promises travel in birth and bringeth forth, that occasioneth much more spiritual joy; this is clear from Ps. 28. 7. *The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusted in him, and I was helped. And he draweth this excellent conclusion from it, Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my soul will I praise him.* And we conceive, that sometimes, God trusteth the accomplishment of the promises with some precious manifestation of himself to the soul, which maketh them to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; but however, this is the matter of a spiritual song, *That mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace are kissing one another: Is it not a pleasant matter of a song to behold love making promises, and to behold faithfulness accomplishing them.* And the last is, that the observation of the accomplishment of promises, doth strengthen a Christians Faith in his interest in God; so that now many disputings are silenced, & many questions now are out of the way, this is clear, Ps. 31. 21, 22. *David confesseth his quarrelling before, but when once the Lord had shewed his marvellous loving kindness in a strong city, then all his quarrel was against himself, because he had quarrelled, and did say in his haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.*

And



And now we shall only speak a little unto some things that we would press upon you, from that which we have spoken; And the first duty is, that Christians would be much in waiting for the accomplishment of the promises; and standing upon their watch tower until the *vision shall speak*: and we shall only give you these to enforce it. It is commanded that ye should so do, this is clear from *Pf. 27.* at the close where *David* presseth that duty very much, *wait on the Lord*, saith he, and if that be not enough, he will repeat that command in that same verse, *wait on the Lord*: and no doubt the doubling of it speaketh not only the advantage that is in it, but our difficulty to obey it, and the great necessity that we have to go about it: and that same word is repeated by *David*, *Pf. 31. 24. Be of good courage*, which is the same, to wait upon the Lord. 2. These that wait patiently for the accomplishment of the promises, God will strengthen them to wait: this is clear from *Pf. 27.* at the close, *wait on the Lord*, and when we are *Hagar* like, casting away the child of hope, he will open our eyes, and give us refreshment, by which we may be supported under our disquietment, and he shall strengthen thine heart; And there is this, 3. There shall be a speedy accomplishment of the promises; it is not long before all the mercies that ever the Lord hath promised, and thou hast believed, shall be told down to you, as it were, in one summe, principal and interest; as is clear from *Hab. 2. 3.* where he positively asserteth, *That the vision will come, and will not tarry*. There is indeed a pleasant seeming contradiction in that verse, he had said before, *that the vision would tarry*, and yet here he saith, *that the vision will not tarry, but will surely come*, in which ye may see the conformity both of sense and faith, and that noble contradiction that is between their assertions, sense asserteth that the promise doth tarry too long, and Faith cr

ing out, it will surely come, it will not tarry, which is set down, 2 Pet. 3. 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise.* 4. Promises that come unto us through the most strong and lively exercise of Faith, and that are expected and longed for by us before they come, they are most relishing and sweet, and those mercies come unto us with a binding tye of love: this is somewhat pointed at, in *Is.* 25. 9. where the Church cryeth forth, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his salvation,* their waiting and expecting of the promise to be accomplished in this time, is there the fountain of their song, and of their spiritual joy: I think sometimes a Christian is like that unbelieving lord, 2 King. 7. 2. that though they meet with the accomplishment of a promise, yet they do not taste of the sweetness that is in it, because they did not believe the word of the Lord.

The second duty that we would press from what we have spoken, is that Christians would close with the promises for their everlasting inheritance, since the promises of the Covenant are exceeding great, and exceeding precious, and the advantage that lyeth in them is unspeakable. O! should not these things proclaim aloud unto us, *close with the promises as your portion for ever?* I think, one that hath a right to the promises, and hath entered himself Heir unto the vast inheritance, he may sometimes rejoyce in that threefold mystery of the Gospel, that to a natural man can hardly appear other then a contradiction. 1. He may say sometimes, *I have nothing,* and yet *possess all things;* for when he looketh unto his being in the World, he is a poor *Lazarus*, having no place wherein to lay his head; but when he casteth his eye upon his spiritual inheritance, then he beholdeth his treasures, and is constrained to cry out, *I possess all things.* 2. Sometimes he may cry forth, *I am rich,* and yet *I am exceeding poor:* he may be rich in



in hopes, and yet poor in his possessions. There is much of a Christians treasure that lieth in hope; he is that thing that wil make the Christian sweetly quiet in all other in comparison of that: that is the motto of the Christian, *spero meliora*; which he holdeth up in a flag, even in the greatest storm, and at length he findeth it true, that hope *maketh not ashamed*. 3. Some time the Christian will cry forth; *I am always sorrowing*, and yet *always rejoycing*: when he casteth his eye upon himself, he will sit down and water his countenance with tears; but when with the other eye he reflecteth upon Jesus Christ, *he will rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory*; a Christian can both weep and rejoyce at one time, and again he can *rejoice and weep*: no doubt, the reflecting upon the immense hope, and the everlasting Crown will make a Christian rejoyce in the midst of all his disquietments and anxieties in the world; he can look to the back of time, and behold a glorious inheritance. A Christian hath an eye of an Eagle that can behold and discern things afar off.

The third duty that we would press upon you, is to long for the day when all the promises of the covenant of Grace shal receive their compleat accomplishment, & when ye shal be entered into the everlasting fruition of all the things wherein your blessedness consisteth. There is a threefold *come* that Christ speaketh to the soul that is united unto him, all which they sweetly obey. There is that first *come* which is in *Mat. 11. Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden*. And there is that second *come*, *Isai. 26. Come, my people enter into thy chambers*, which is to entertain that excellent correspondency with him in troublesome times: And there is that third matchless *come*, which Christ shall say to his own in the day of their standing before the Tribunal, *Come, O blessed of my Father*: Shal we say it, that if we had faith as a grain of

mustard seed, we would cry forth, *Why is his chariot long in coming* ; and did we relish or made a high account of the matchless promises of the boundless covenant, we would cry forth, *O that our time would pass away as the ships of desire.* I shall say no more but this, *Christ is gone up with a shout unto heaven, and shall come again with the sound of a trumpet, sing praises unto our God, sing praises unto our God, sing praises.* The last thing that we would press upon you, is, that ye would mark the time of the accomplishment of the promises; And as to this, I shall say but these: That ordinarily the time of the accomplishment of the promises, is the time when sense, reason, and probability doth most contradict them: this is clear, *Jer. 37.* in the fulfilling of the promises that were made to *Judah* in their captivity, was it not when they were as a *valley of dead bones*, and their hopes were in manner cut off for their part, from the 11. verse of that chapter, compared with the 12. And, 2. That the time of the accomplishment of the promises, ordinarily, is from *Dan. 9. 2, 3.* and from *Jer. 29. 12.* compared a praying time: this is also clear with the 10. and the 12. thus saith the Lord, the time when he will visit them, and perform his good word to them, causing them to return, it shall be a time when they will call upon me, and shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto them. And, 3. The time of the accomplishment of his promises, It is a time when our thoughts of the promises are high and large, when we begin to value our mercies, this is a sign that mercie is near, and it is bringing forth: however our duty to wait on him, who can give a blessing unto his Word, and sweetly perform his promises: I thought not to limit infinite Wisdom, nor to say to him that is infinite in strength, *How can such a thing be?* but answer all objections of misbelief with this,

E

this,



this, God hath spoken it, and he will also do it, draw all objections of misbelief in that glorious mysterious Name of His, *I am that I am*. To Him praise.

## SERMON VI.

*Acts 26. 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith in me.*

**W**Hen first we did begin our discourse upon this precious and excellent grace of Faith; I told you that we intended to speak of it under a twofold notion and consideration. First, As it layeth hold upon Christ for Justification; and of this we have spoken to you at some length, as ye have heard. Secondly, As it closeth with Christ for Sanctification; and of this we are to speak of it, which are a part of that excellent Oration and Discourse that *Paul* had before *Agrippa* in his own defence; In which Oration and Discourse of his, ye may behold these four things eminently shining. 1. That Godliness, and good manners are not inconsistent, nor contrary one to another: Therein ye will see in the second and third verses of this Chapter, *Paul* acting the part of a courtly Orator: and believe it, there is more good manners to be learned by being seven days in the School of Christ, then by being seven years in all the Courts of *France*. Secondly, that innocent Policy he made use of in the deliverance of this Oration; which likewise doth appear in the second and third verses of this Chapter, where he endeavours to insinuate and ingratiate himself in the favours of the person before whom he stood; I confess, piety is the best policy that is set up in entertaining piety, howbeit, true policy.

move in one orb and sphere with piety, and the one  
 not contrary to the other in some case. 3. This  
 shineth in that discourse, even the spiritual bold-  
 ness *Paul* had in giving an excellent confession of his  
 faith, and the declaring him to be God, even *Jesus*  
*Christ* in whom he did believe; *Christ* witnessed a glo-  
 rious confession before *Pontius Pilat* for him, and he  
 would witness a glorious confession from *Agrippa* for  
*Christ*, that since *Christ* had not denied him in that  
 notable day, he would not now deny precious *Christ*  
 this day: and this is from the beginning and all a-  
 ges. Lastly, This shineth in the words that *Paul*  
 hath set forth, the matchless freedom and unspeak-  
 able riches of *Christ*; not only toward himself in that  
 he did cast the lot of everlasting love toward him;  
 but likewise toward the Gentiles, to whom he was  
 sent as a Preacher, and that he did gloriously con-  
 descend to visit the dark places of the earth, and to  
 give the morning and the day spring from on high aris-  
 ing on the habitations of cruelty. And in this verse  
 which we have read, you may behold these five glori-  
 ous ends of the preaching of this everlasting Gospel,  
 attaining of which, Ministers are made instruments  
 of God. The first is, to open the eyes of the blind,  
 which in short is, even this, to give those that are ig-  
 norant of God, the spiritual knowledge of the deep  
 mysteries of the Father, and of the Son. So that from  
 this, ye may see that the Gospel hath a kind of omni-  
 potency in producing effects of the power of nature.  
 The second we may see in these words, to remove them  
 from darkness to light; which importeth these two;  
 The removing of persons from an estate of misery,  
 unto an estate of excellent joy. 2. The removing of per-  
 sons from a state of iniquity, unto an estate of holiness:  
 darkness in Scripture pointeth out sin, and light in  
 Scripture pointeth out holiness. 3. The bringing us  
 from under the power of Satan unto God, the mak-  
 ing



ing a blessed exchange of captivity and bondage, these who were under the captivity of Satan, be under the captivity of love, that those who were under the bondage of sin, may be under the sweet obedience of Christ, *whose yoke is easie, and burden is light*, Mat. 11. 30. 4. That persons receive the remission of sin and the forgiveness of iniquity. This is the great voice of the Gospel, come to a crucified Christ, come to a pardoning Christ, come to a glorified Christ, Christ hath the pardon of iniquity in his one hand, and riches of himself in the other, and these are the great motives by which he studieth to perswade us to come. And the last is in the close of the verse, that persons may receive forgiveness of sin and inheritance among them which are sanctified. *Faith that is in me*; that is, that they may have a share of that glorious mansion, of that excellent Kingdom that Christ hath purchased, and hath gone before to prepare. And withal, in this verse as the words are set down, ye may see the excellent and orderly method that the Gospel keepeth in conquering souls, you may see these excellent allurements, these persuasive arguments that Christ holdeth forth to conquer you, as it were, Christ cometh not to us cloathed with the robes of Majesty, but cloathed with the robe of Love and Advantage, knowing that in this position he shall most gain upon our hearts.

Now in speaking unto that last end of the preaching of the Gospel, we shall only according to our present purpose, take notice of this one thing from it, intending to prosecute it as it is an end of the Gospel (but as it is a property of Faith: and it is that, *that in Jesus Christ hath a noble excellent influence upon the growth of Sanctification, and the attaining of holiness*. They are sanctified, saith he, through faith in me. You shall not stand long to clear this unto you, it is evident from Act. 15. 9. where the Apostle telleth

purifying our hearts by faith; and likewise, 1 Tim. 1. 5. where a pure heart and faith unfeigned; they are joyned and linked together. As likewise, 1 Job. 3. 3. Every man that hath this hope in him, he purifyeth himself. All the Graces of the Gospel they are linked together by a golden and inseparable chain, so that he that obtaineth one, he shall obtain all; yea more, all the graces of the Gospel, they have a mutual influence upon one anothers growth, so that we may compare them unto Hippocrates twins, of whom it was reported, that they did laugh and weep together, and they did grow together; even so when one grace doth rejoyce, the rest doth rejoyce with it, and when one grace doth mourn, the rest doth also mourn with it, and when one grace doth grow, the rest of the graces of the Spirit they do likewise grow apace.

There are only three particulars that we shall insist a little upon: First, We shall shew you how faith hath influence upon the attaining of Sanctification, and this we make clear unto you in these respects.

1. In that it discovereth to the soul that matchless excellency, that transcendent beauty, and that surpassing comeliness that is in Christ, which sight doth exceedingly perswade the soul to draw that conclusion, *what have I to do any more with idols?* A glorious sight of Christ, and acquaintance with him, maketh us lose our acquaintance with our idols; and when we are united unto Christ by faith, we break that union we had with them. And indeed the want of the knowledge of the excellent comeliness that is in Christ, and of love to him, is the great occasion that the poorest deities and idols in the world taketh up our hearts: did ye but once see him who is that glorious Sun of righteousness, ye would be forced to put in your Amen unto that excellent confession of Faith, *1. 2. Vanity of vanities, and all is but vanity and vexation of spirit.*



2. In that it is the grace that discovers unto a Christian the spotless holiness of Christ, faith doth not only discover the beauty of Christ, but likewise his holiness, and this doth make the soul fall in love with that excellent thing, *Sanctification*. It is recorded amongst the first steps to sin and misery, that we do so be as God, knowing good and evil: but certainly it is amongst the first steps to life and happiness, when the soul desireth to be holy as he is holy: And I propose, this is the great ground that ye are not much endeavouring a blessed conformity to God, and partakers of the blessed image of Christ, ye know the beauty of holiness.

3. Faith layeth hold upon Jesus Christ, and doth strength and vertue from him for the conquest of lusts, and in raising us up into a blessed conformity unto himself; when the Christian is weak, Faith is that noble correspondent between that emptiness that is in us, and the fulness that is in Christ. Faith is that noble correspondent between that weakness that is in us, and that everlasting strength that is in him: Therefore there are two noble and excellent counsels of Faith: First, It counsels us not to rely upon our own strength; And secondly, to have our course unto him whose Name is *Jehovah* that everlasting strength; And no doubt, if we were more true up in employing Christ by faith, that prophecy should be accomplished, *I will make the feeble ones as David and David as the Angels of God*, and when a Christian is most diffident in himself, then God should present himself to be All-mighty, and All-sufficient.

And, 4. Faiths influence may be cleared in that it layeth hold upon the promises, & doth believe them: and believing of the promises bringeth forth that noble birth, *conformity to God*; according to the word upon which we were speaking, 2 Pet. 1.

believing the promises, ( that is the advantage of it )  
 we are by them made partakers of the divine nature.

5. Faith also believeth the threatnings that are past  
 in Scripture against sin, and the believing them hath  
 an undoubted and strong influence upon the attain-  
 ing and growth of Sanctification ; Faith strengthen-  
 eth the Christian, against the committing of iniqui-  
 ty with these two words ; that word, *Rom. 6. 20.*  
*My soul ( saith Faith ) commit not iniquity, for the*  
*wages of sin is death ;* and that word, *Rev. 21. last,*  
*there shall in no ways enter into that city any thing that*  
*is unclean, or that committeth iniquity.* And be per-  
 suaded of it, that the faith of the threatnings and of  
 the promises that are in Scripture, would be as a  
 threefold cord, not easily broken, to restrain you  
 from the acting of iniquity ; And shall I tell you brief-  
 ly the ground why these cursed hearts of ours do  
 commit iniquity with so little fear, and with so much  
 delight, it is even this, because we believe not the  
 threatnings of God, which shall be accomplished in  
 their own season ; for is it possible that if ye believed  
 that word, *Rev. 21. last, That nothing shall enter in-*  
*to the new Jerusalem that defileth or worketh abomina-*  
*tion, or that maketh a lie ;* that ye durst for a world  
 adventure upon the committing of iniquity, as ye do.  
 And I shall only say to such that do undervalue the  
 threatnings of God, the day is coming when they  
 shall be constrained to cry out, *He hath spoken it, and*  
*he hath done it, and faithful is he.* There is not one jot  
 or title in the Word of the Lord that shall fall to the  
 ground : And believe it, God will be faithful in the  
 accomplishment of his threatnings, as he is faithful  
 in the accomplishment of his promises.

6. Faith discovereth unto a Christian the noble ex-  
 cellencies and those spiritual dignities that are in  
 that everlasting estate that is provided for the Saints  
 in light ; Faith ( as it were ) carrieth up the soul



to the top of *Pisgah*, off which, it is admitted to hold the *promised land*, and truly the seeing of the noble things that are provided for the Saints, can but make them study holiness, since they know there is an impossibility for one to attain to that estate without holiness, because he had said it, *With holiness no man shall see God.* O then, if once ye see Heaven, ye would be constrained to walk in that path of Sanctification, since it is the glorious way which ye must walk in through the gates of that blessed City. But ye know not the excellency that there, it is a fancy and notion unto you: and ground that ye do not study to conform your selves unto that blessed image of God. And I would ask you this one question, Is it possible that such a delusion as this can overtake you, as to think, ye who never studied holiness on earth, shall yet enter into Heavens gates? I know there are some that say in their hearts, *I shall have peace though I walk in the imaginations of mine own heart:* and many more that suppose that they might fight and overcome, and they may quite the estate of nature, and be complete in the estate of grace, all in one day: But will ye deceive your selves, *Can a nation be born in one day?* Or is there but one step between hell and heaven? O remember, though nothing be impossible with God, yet there was but one thief saved upon the cross. 7. Faith hath influence upon the attaining of holiness in this respect, that it believeth the exceeding great advantages that are promised unto the person that studieth holiness. Faith believeth the word, Mat. 5. 8. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God.* Faith it layeth hold upon the truth of the excellent sayings, and maketh the Christian endeavour to attain unto a likeness and conformity with him, so that he may be admitted to behold his face for all eternity, and to be made like unto him.

8. Faith discovereth unto a Christian the sinfulness of sin, this is never done till once they be in the lively exercise of the grace of Faith. And I will give you these three grounds why faith compleatly discovereth the sinfulness of sin. 1. Faith letteth us see the person against whom we commit this sin, and that doth exceedingly aggredge sin; for when the Christian is admitted to behold God, and to see that matchless excellency that is in him, then (saith he) what a beast was I to offend such a glorious Majesty as he? what a fool was I to kick against the pricks, or to enter in the lists with such an infinite God? 2. Faith letteth a Christian see these excellent obligations of love that Christ hath imposed upon us; Faith letteth us see the ancient and everlasting love of Christ; Faith lets that grace that letteth us see his sufferings, Faith letteth us see all that he hath done for us, and this maketh the Christian to cry out, *Do I thus requite the Lord, O foolish one and unwise?* And no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the study of this duty, he would be less in contracting debt, and were you but seriously taken up in the study of these two great Registers; 1. The Register in which all the infinite acts of love are recorded. And, 2. That register in which all your acts of offending precious Christ are written, ye would be astonished & ashamed to see so much forgiven you, & durst not sin any more; there ye would see infinite mercy *desiring to rejoyce over judgement*; and there ye would see the spotless riches of that transcendent grace that is in Christ. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see the disadvantages of sin, and what woful effects doth follow upon it, and this doth exceedingly hold forth the sinfulness of sin.

The second think that we shall speak to concerning Faiths influence in the attaining sanctification, shall be to enquire a little into these things that hin-



der even believers from attaining this blessed effect of their Faith; for some Christians there are, that in some respects are taken up in the exercise of Faith, making use of Christ for Sanctification, and yet their making use of Christ by Faith, doth not weaken the strength of their idols (at least) to their apprehensions, neither doth raise them up to a conformity with God; so that they are constrained sometimes to cry out, *I shall once fall by the hand of one of mine iniquities*; and when they fight and do not overcome, they are at last constrained to say, *There is no hope*.

The first ground of such a dispensation is, That a Christian is not constant in his actings of faith, he will be strong in faith to day, and when the morrow cometh, he will faint in that exercise, and this doth exceedingly interrupt the noble victory of Faith; for when Faith hath gotten its advantages, they lose them through security and negligence, that is a command that should be continually obeyed, *Trust in the Lord at all times*; and no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the constant acting of faith, he should sometimes sing that song, *I trusted in God, and I was helped*.

Secondly, The most part of Christians, they are not strong and vigorous in actings of their Faith, their Faith is exceedingly weak, and so they cannot bring forth these noble fruits and effects of Faith. If we were trusting in God with all our hearts, then that promise *Pf. 37. 5.* should be accomplished unto us, *Trust in the Lord, and he shall bring it to pass*. Thirdly, There is a strong heart-conjunction, and soul-union between us and our Idols: we are joyned to our Idols, and therefore we cannot be easily divorced; yea, when we are in the heat of the war against them, there is a procurator within, that cryeth, *O spare this little one, or this profitable or pleasant one*, and this is ordinarily our

pro

practice, to spare the choicest of our lusts, so that our *Agags* may cry forth, *The bitterness of death is past.* But I confess, if that union were once dissolved, we should then be heard with greatest earnestness to cry forth, *O blessed be the Lord that teacheth my hands to fight.* Fourthly, sometimes a Christian layeth too much weight upon the actings of Faith, and doth not imploy Faith, but as an instrument to which Christ must bestow strength to conquer. Sometimes we think that faith hath the vertue of overcoming in its own hand, but remember, faith is but an empty thing without Christ, as you may see, *Act. 15.9.* where the *purifying their hearts by faith*, is ascribed to the holy Ghost, so that the activity of faith is from him, and not in it self. Fifthly, a Christian doth not hate sin with a perfect hatred, even in the time of his warfare with his lusts, & with these strong Idols that are within him, but here is a secret heart inclination to that very idol which he doth oppose: So that oftentimes there is that twofold contradiction in a Christian; Sometimes his light will cry, mortifie such an idol, & yet his heart will cry, O spare such an idol; yea more, sometimes his heart will cry, mortifie such an idol & yet his heart will cry, O spare such an idol: That is to say, there will be one part of our affection crying one thing, and another part of it will cry another thing. O! but there is a remarkable command for the perfect hatred of sin, *Rom. 11. Abhor that which is evil;* the word is in the original, hate evil as ye would do hell that is, have perfect hatred to sin. O to hate iniquity as much as hell: and joyn that word, *Eph. 5.11. Reprove the unfruitful works of darkness*, or as the word may be rendered, *make out by unanswerable arguments*, to your tentations that you cannot embrace the unfruitful works of darkness, convince your tentations that ye cannot do it; As we suppose, it was a noble



arguing of *Joseph* when he was tempted, *How shall I do this?* he puts the temptation (as it were) to it: temptation! give me one ground why I should commit such an iniquity. And certainly, if we were thus reasoning with our temptations, they shou'd flee before us. But the truth is, we embrace the desire of our temptation upon implicate faith. It is a sad regrave, and yet I may utter it, O if men would but deal with God, as they do by Satan, we never dispute the promise of Satan, and never examine these allurements he setteth forth, and yet we constantly dispute with God upon every thing. Sixthly, A Christian promoveth not in the growth of Sanctification, though in some measure exercising faith, because he hath not such a heart to holiness. If we did discover more that excellent beauty, that is, in being cloathed with that glorious robe of the righteousness of Christ, and in having the sweet draughts of the image of Christ engraven upon our hearts, we wold have more victory over our lust. There is a command for *a perfect love* to that which is good, & holiness in that same place, *Rom. 12. 9.* and *cleave* (saith he) *to that which is good*: or, as the word may be rendred, *be married and glewed* to that which is good, let there be an unseparable & indissoluble knot of union between you & that which is good. And certainly, if once we believed that report which is given of holiness, we would endeavour more to be cloathed with it; but that is the great ground why we advance not in holiness, we know not the advantage nor dignity, to be made *like God*. O will ye thinke on it: What a thing is it for you who are the dust under his feet to be made conform to him? Seventhly, a Christian is not much in the exercise of other duties that should go along with faith, suspect that faith is presumption, that can act, and be maintained without Prayer, certainly prayer it keepeth in the life. Faith, Prayer, it is that grace that must act mutually.

ll with faith , in accomplishing that blessed work of  
 : Sanctification, and if we prayed more, and believed  
 more, then we should have more to speak concerning  
 reate victory over our lusts. When was it, O Christian,  
 e used expectant of Heaven, that ye was constrained to  
 tent up an *Ebenezer*, and cry forth , *Hitherto hath the*  
*ye helped me?* When was it, O Christian, and expe-  
 d, ant of Heaven, that ye was put to cry forth , *God*  
*of Sath arisen , and mine enemies are scattered before my*  
*terce?* I will tell you what is your practice, ye make  
 upon a covenant with your ido's as *Nabab* did with  
 a nole men of *Jabesh Gilead*, 1 Sam. 11. 23. your lusts  
 near fire to make you pluck out your right eyes, & there  
 near nothing your lusts will command you , but almost  
 let will obey ; but would you send out prayers as a  
 ion messenger to tell the King of such tyranny, ye should  
 g the how better what it is to be victorious. There is such  
 upon covenant between the graces of the spirit, especial-  
 ly between Faith and Prayer (if so we may allude )  
 hich was made between *Joab* and *Abishai* , 2 Sam. 10.  
 and one grace, as it were, faith to another , if I be  
 s the weak, *come over and help me* : and if ye be weak, I  
 the will come and help you. When one grace is like to  
 fall in battel , then another cometh and helpeth it :  
 o when faith is like to die, then prayer and experience  
 hich cometh in, and sweetly helpeth faith ; when love  
 o beginning to die, and wax cold in the fight, then  
 w faith cometh in and putteth life in love ; and when  
 v patience is like to fail and be overcome , then faith  
 hich comes in and speaks that word to patience , *wait on*  
*God, for I shall yet praise him for the health of his coun-*  
*th nance.* Oftentimes our patience and our sense, they  
 ut join together , for when sense speaketh good things,  
 h patience is in life; but when once sense preacheth hard  
 v things, it is like to die, and faith must then maintain  
 life and uphold it.

The third thing that we shall speak as to Faiths in-  
 fluence



fluence upon sanctification, shall be to draw these conclusions from the point.

The first is, That ye may know from this the end and original of your little success over corruption. There are many that are troubled with this question. O, What is the ground that I get not victory over my lusts: and they propose that question to Christ that once the Disciples proposed to him, *why was it that I could not cast out such a Devil?* And I can give you other answer then Christ gave to them, it is because ye have not Faith, *For if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto your idols, depart from us, and they should obey you, and there should not be a mountain in the way between you and Heaven but if ye had Faith, it should be roled away, and become a plain.* And the great ground why many are groaning under the captivity of their idols, is, that they are not much in the exercise of Faith; sometimes ye enter in the lists with your lusts in your own strength, then ye are carried captives, and if ye do enter in the lists having some Faith, yet ye maintain not the war, if Faith get but one stroak.

I will tell you six things; which if Faith overcome it keepeth the field, and maketh the Christian sing song of triumph, even before a compleat victory.

First, Faith helpeth a Christian to overcome the idol of impatience and discontent, some never meet with a discouragement, but they cryed out, *This wil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer?* they are soon put to the end of their patience; now faith can overcome such an idol, & I wil tel you three excellent things that faith performeth to the soul under impatience, or when it is in hazard of it. 1. Faith telleth the christian, *there is an end,* & their expectation shall not be cut off; Faith telleth there is a morning as well as night, and this keepeth the soul from being overcome with discouragement, when they are brought to the

midnight of trouble : Faith can tell what hour of the night it is, & how near the approaching of the morning, when day shall break and their clouds flee away. Faith helpeth the Christian to see there is much in Christ to make up any loss or disadvantage that they have: if ye lose your son, or your choicest contentment in the world, Faith will say such a word as *Elkana* said to *Hannah*, *1 Sam. 1. 8.* Is not *Christ* better to thee then *thy sons*? the choicest contentments ye can lose (that faiths divinity) *Christ* is worth an hundred of them; and so this maketh the soul to be ashamed of their impatency, and to give over their fretting at the excellent and wise dispensations of God. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see, that there is not a dispensation that he meeteth with, but it hath these two excellent ends, it hath our advantage as one end, and the glory of the Lord as another end; and there is not a dispensation that a Christian meeteth with, but these are the glorious ends proposed in it. And therefore I would only give you this advice, evermore when ye meet with a dark dispensation, let faith interpret it, for it is only the best interpreter of dark dispensations, for if ye meet with sense, this is its interpretation, it is not chastning me in love, but punishing me with the wound of an enemy, but faith will prophesie good things to you in the darkest night.

The second next great idol that faith will bring down, is this idol of covetousness and desire to the things of the world. I think that word, *Ecclesiast. 3.* was never so much accomplished as it is in these days, and amongst you, *He hath set the world in your hearts*, that is the idol that dweleth and lodgeth within you; yea, the world it hath your first thoughts in the morning, and your last thoughts at night, yea, more, it hath your thoughts when you are at prayer, and when you are at preaching; yea, it hath such a domination over you, that it giveth you, as it were, a new Bible,



Bible, and in all the ten Commands scrapeth out the Name of God, and setteth down the world. And whereas God saith, *Thou shalt have no other God before me*, the world saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me*, &c. But faith will bring this idol low, and soe let you see the vanity and emptiness of it; yea, faith would let you see a more noble object, and withal discover unto you how short your time is, and how few hours ye have to spend in following after lies; and I am perswaded of this, that if ye could win to shake hands with cold death every day, and say, thou at last shall be my prince, and shall be the king to whom I shall be a subject; and if ye believed that the day of eternity were approaching, it would be a mean to mortifie these pursuits after the world; and I shall say, he is a blessed Christian that can maintain always such thoughts of the world, as he shall have when he standing upon the utmost line between Time and Eternity. I shall say it, and believe it; O worldling and O thou that hast the Moon upon thy head, and in thy heart, the day shall once come that thou mayest preach as much of the vanity of the world, as thou that undervalued it never so much.

The third great idol that faith will bring low, that idol of *self-love* and *self-indulgence*, that which is the great mother of all other idols. I think if there were no more to be said against that idol of *self-love* & *self-indulgence*, then that which is in *2 Tim. 3. 2.* were sufficient, that among all the great idols of the latter times, this is put in the first place, *they shall be lovers of themselves*; we cannot take pains for Christ, we cannot go about the exercise of any duty, because the idol of *self-indulgence* forbiddeth us. I will tell you its counsel & great advice it giveth you, O person, *pitty thy self*, that same counsel Peter gave his Master, *biddeth you pity your self*. But if ye could rightly interpret that language, it would be this; *destroy*

self, for self-indulgence and self-love is that which will ruine you. O what blessed attainments of God; what blessed fruitions of Jesus Christ, what advancement in mortification, what conformity to God, hath that idol of self-indulgence obstructed, and not only utterly ruined even in the best? I think, if once ye could set your foot upon that idol, the rest should fall apace; that is the *general* of all the forces of your lusts, and it is a *Saul*, the head higher then the rest of all your idols within you.

The fourth idol that faith will subdue, is self-righteousness, this is a great thing we maintain, we will never renounce our own righteousness, and submit to the righteousness of Christ, and the great ground of it is, that there is this principle within us all, we love to go to Heaven thorow a Covenant of works, & we never desire to be much obliged to any other, we cannot submit our selves to the righteousness of Christ.

The fifth great idol that faith can subdue, is that of *pleasure*, the world, and the contentments of it; *pleasure* is the great idol that many worship, and adore, there are some that love the gain of the world, and there are others that love the pleasures of the world; but Faith hath a noble influence upon the bringing low such an idol; for faith discovereth to a soul more excellent pleasures, more sweet delights nor is to be found under the sun; faith maketh a Christian lose his taste unto all things that are here below; faith is that grace that maketh us grow blind, and not much to behold these passing vanities, these transient delights of a present evil world.

Our second conclusion is this, That as faith helpeth Sanctification, so Sanctification helpeth Faith. I will tell you three great advantages faith hath by the growth & exercise of Sanctification; 1. It is a noble evidence of faith, & maketh a Christian to be perswaded that he is settled upon the rock, and that his interest in God, is made



made sure. Sanctification is that which will help a Christian daily to read his interest in God ; this is clear from *Jam. 2. 18. I will shew thee my faith by my works*, where this is clearly holden forth, that a Christian much in the work of Sanctification, he can on all times give an extract of his faith, & as it were discover it, and shew it to the world. 2. Sanctification maketh faith perfect, according to that remarkable word, *Jam. 2. 22. And by works was faith made perfect*. There is a noble perfection that redoundeth to faith through the exercise of the work of Sanctification, not only is it thereby made manifest, and receive such a shining lustre and splendor, as that sometimes the eyes of carnal men are even dazled to behold a Believer, but it also receiveth strength and power. Faith is not of the nature of these things that speak themselves in bringing forth; but on the contrary, faith bring forth a hundred children (I mean works of holiness) in one day it groweth strong; and this is further clear, *2 Pet. 1. 8. For if these things be in you and abound, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful*. And from that other word, *Jam. 2.* where it is said, *Faith without works is dead, being alone*: If faith alone, it wants its spiritual life and vigor; but if ye were much in the exercise of the work of Sanctification, would, no doubt, attain to a noble and lively act of that grace of Faith. And lastly, if a Christian be much in the work of Sanctification, there will be a comfortable exercise of Faith; Sometimes faith is exercised with much anxiety, and sometimes with much doubting: but faith and a pure conscience joyned together, they make an excellent feast, and maketh a Christian rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full glory.

Thirdly, we may draw this conclusion, If faith have influence upon the work of Sanctification, and helpeth the producing of a noble conformity to God, then

then, I say, there are many that their faith is a delusion, and their hope shall be cut off as a spiders web. There are some that have faith, that have not Sanctification, nor knows not what it is, and shall not that faith unquestionably perish as a dream, and vanish as the vision of the night! and therefore if ye would testifie the reality of your faith, then study more the work of sanctification. I shall but from Job 8.14, 15. give you these eight properties of a hypocrites faith and hope, which may make you try and examine your self, 1. Their hope and their faith is but an act of folly, yea, there is not such an act of foolishness under Heaven, as a hypocrites hope, because it is but a castle in the air, and as writing to himself a charter on the sand: so that word ye have readred, whose hope shall be cut off, Is in the Original, whose folly shall be cut off, shewing this, that they build without a foundation, and so their faith must be most unsure and uncertain. 2. The thing they hope for, shall at last loath them: O hypocrites, ye hope for enjoyment of Christ, but be perswaded of it, Christ shall eternally loath you, and ye shall eternally loath Christ, that is clear in that same word, whose hope shall be cut off, or as the word may be read, whose hope shall loath them; the thing he hoped for shall loath him, and Christ shall say, Depart, I know you not. 3. And though ye have now much delight, and pleasure in the actings of your presumptuous hope, yet at last, ye shall loath that hope; the word will carry, that not only the things ye hoped for shall loath you, but ye likewise shall loath your hope. The day is coming that ye shall cry forth, cursed be the day that ever I believed that I should get Heaven. 4. It shall at last be the matter of his vexation, from that word, whose hope shall be cut off, or as the word may be rendered, whose hope shall vex him. O when the hypocrites shall meet with that anxious, that dreadful disappointment one day, they shall then put their



their hand on their head, being ashamed because of their confidence. 4. He studieth by all means to keep his hope, though it be but false: therefore have ye that word in the 15. verse, *he holdeth it fast*; or as another word is, *he keepeth it with hand and arm, with all strength* he keepeth his hope: so that if Christ would come from Heaven, and say, *man, thou art a hypocrite, and thy hope shall be cut off*, they would say, I will keep my hope, Sir, and maintain it, and that is evidence your hope is not built upon the foundation. I love never a Faith that in this side of time is changeable, and never knoweth what it is to hold ups nor downs. 5. It is built always upon a wrong foundation, which is imported in that word, *he shall lean upon his house*, which we suppose may be interpreted thus, he shall lean upon his *worldly enjoyments*, or upon these spiritual-like enjoyments he met with. The hope of a hypocrite is never built upon Christ, and so unquestionably that hope shall be cut off, and evanish. 6. Let hypocrites hold fast their hope with both the arms, I will say these three words to them; First, if the Ministers should preach to you, and desire you to quite your hope, and ye will not, yet both your hope and you shall be separate, as it is in that word, *Your hope shall depart from you, and ye shall quite it*. Secondly, your hope will bring you to death, and no further, according to that word, *Job 18:14. whose hope shall bring them to the King of terrors*: Will it bring me no further, say you? O, no, *The King of terrors shall separate you and your hope*. Thirdly, the day is coming when the foundation of it shall be discovered, and there shall not be a delusion, but it shall be unfolded. The day is approaching, when Christ shall ask how you got your faith, and how you maintained it. 7. The hypocrite's hope is a poor building, it is as a *spiders web*, which conceive (without being critick) is this. The hope

hypocrites, they spin it out of their own bowels, they have it not from Christ, but as ye see a spider spin out of its own bowels, so do they out of themselves, it is no better stuff then their own rotten righteousness: Christ never begat those unto a lively hope. Let me beseech you therefore, that by al means ye wold study to make sure your interest in God, and to build your faith on him, whose Name is that *munition of rocks*; For believe it, I may say it with much perswasion, I know there are many that shall once meet (if God prevent it not) with a dreadful disappointment: and therefore as ye would not incur that eternal hazard that is attending those that presumptuously take hold of a hope, before Christ take hold of them, study to search your hope what it is: I desire not to raze any foundation of their hope that is laid by the hand of Christ; but would desire, and charge you to raze the foundation of that hope which ye have laid from the beginning by your own hands, *and he knew it not*. I would press these three things upon you, First, O ye that are strangers to Christ, and that know not what it is to imbrace the offers of the everlasting Gospel: obey that excellent counsel, 2 Chron. 30. 8. *Give Christ your hand*; for that word which ye have rendered, *Yeeld your self to the Lord*, it is in the original, *Give your hand to God*; which is in short, *Marry him*, and be content to contract your self to him; for believe it, the day is coming, that either that contract between you and Christ shall be eternally confirmed, or that contract between the devil and you, shall be eternally ratified. And I suppose, there is so much spoken to the commendation of that noble Plant of Renown, that ye may take Christ (if so we may speak) blindly, ye may close your eyes & take him, for he shall never disappoint your hope; for let you think of him to Eternity, he shall always be above your thoughts. Secondly, I would earnestly desire you once to search  
and



and try what was the first rise of your faith in Jesus Christ: I am perswaded of it, there are many that take up their faith at their foot, they never travelled for pain, & yet faith is brought forth. Is not this a mystery? shall it be said, *before they travelled, they brought forth*. I do not question but there may be lesser and greater pangs of the new birth, but this is most certain, there is always some either lesser troubles or greater, till the child be brought forth; and yet I may condemn them that stay too long in the place of the breaking forth children. Christ will never refuse you when ye really come, because ye have not been so many years and days imprioned to the Law. Thirdly, Let me desire of you to go and ask, is there a grave between you and heaven, in all that way through which the Saints have travelled, upon which this is written here lyeth a man that sincerely sought life from Christ, and he denyed him; I think without encroaching too much upon the searching forth of the exercise of the Saints in Heaven, I think we may suppose, there may be in Heaven some *Queries* and Interrogations; Christ shall ask, O beloved, Did ye want any thing here below when ye were sent forth to travel in the world? and ye shall be constrained to answer, No: Christ shall ask the question at you Did I not all things well? and ye shall be constrained to answer, Yes: Christ shall propose that question, Are ye not well rewarded for all your pains? and you shall be constrained to answer Yes: O but to take him, He is the blessed and most excellent One in Heaven and in Earth, it is the best bargain that ever ye made: O ye Merchants that have made many excellent bargains to your own apprehensions, will ye come and make one excellent bargain yet, that will make you eternally up? And what is that? Come and buy Christ and take him for nothing: this is not your ordinary bargaining: there is few comes to you and biddeth you buy excellent things

*without*

without money; but come in the Gospel, and ye shall  
 get Christ *without money*: O niggards that are loath  
 to spend your money in the world, will ye come to  
 Christ, and believe on him, take him freely: O say ye,  
 if I could get three things of Christ, I would come,  
 1. I would have much gold and silver: I say come to  
 Christ & ye shall get much gold & silver: is that true? it  
 is abundantly true, See *Job 22. 25, 26.* where pre-  
 senting that exhortation, *Acquaint thy self with God.* &  
 using many arguments, he saith, *Thou shalt lay up  
 gold as dust, and the gold of Ophire as the stones of the  
 brooks.* Is not that gold enough? yea, ye shall have  
 silver likewise, *Thou shalt have plenty of silver.* In the  
 26. verse, ye shall not only have gold and silver, but  
 shall have *plenty of it* and shall have the most excellent  
 and refined gold. But O say ye, what, will that pro-  
 mise be literally accomplished to me, if I come to  
 Christ? I would only say these three things to thee;  
 1. Come to Christ, & if gold and silver be for thy ad-  
 vantage thou shalt have it literally accomplished. 2. I  
 say, ye shall have as much contentment in Jesus Christ,  
 as if ye had this house full of gold; 3. I will say this to  
 thee, Christ shall be thy gold and silver, according to  
 that word in the 26. verse, which is most remark-  
 able; yea, *Almighty shall be thy defence*; or as it is in  
 the Original, shall be thy *gold*, speaking of the pro-  
 mise of gold before. Secondly, Ye say, I would say  
 this, that what I purpose might be accomplished.  
 I say, come to Christ and ye shall have that likewise,  
*Job 22. 28. Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be e-*  
*stablished unto thee*; which I conceive doth not only  
 take in these spiritual decrees, but likewise these that  
 relate to temporal enjoyments. But there is a third  
 thing I would have (say ye) and I would come to  
 Christ, and it is, that I might have all the desires of  
 my heart; I say, O man, and O woman, come to  
 Christ and thou shalt have what thou desirest; this  
 is



is clear from Ps. 37. 4. *Delight thy self in God, and shall give thee the desires of thine heart*; What can have man but it is there? Would ye have any thing Christ? He putteth a blank in your hand, and saith the word which he said to *Solomon, Ask, What wouldst thou have, and I shall give thee*. Christ, as it were, putteth his Name to the foot of a clean sheet of paper, and desireth you to ask what ye would have, and is this an excellent bargain? O, niggard, what would ye have which ye will not get in Christ? And be persuaded, that ye that refuse and will not take him, the eternal curse of all that is in Heaven will return upon thy head, the eternal curse of all the expectants of Heaven, and heirs of Life, will return upon the head of that person, that will not take Christ. And cursed shall that person be who will not take Christ, and one day *all the Congregation in Heaven and Earth* shall say, *Amen*.

### SERMON VII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine yourselves whether ye be in Faith? prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.*

**A**ssurance is a precious gift which many that in these days do undervalue, & tread under foot. do not the Christians of these times go halting between two opinions, being neither positive that they are received into the adoption of children, nor yet positive that they are yet in a state of alienation, and enemies in their minds by wicked works; yea, & (that which is worse) there are many among us that walk with much contentment under their uncertainty. I think it is a fault to be condemned in many, they pursue not to satisfy their sense for the present, nor to have a solid well grounded assurance for time to come: I covet wish that all the debates and questions of these days

at take up so much of our time, and so much of our spirits from better things, were happily drowned in these four excellent questions, which without controversy are of greatest concernment for all to have re-

1. Where shall I rest all night when the long hours of the everlasting evening shall be stretch- out upon me, and whether or not hath Christ gone before to take up a place for me in his Fathers house?

It is a soul-concerning question, *Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* to be asking at him that can sweetly resolve you. And, 3. not to rest there, but to be

lying forth in the morning, *what shall I do to be saved,* and to be crying out in the evening, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* 4. It is sweet to be asking se-

riously, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* There is much of our time spent in asking news from Court, and from abroad, concerning the revolutions of

states and Kingdoms: But I suppose, it were better to ask, what news from Heaven concerning thy self, and what news from within, and news of thy Bride-

rooms coming? for these are great Courts, I mean the Court of Heaven, and the Court of Conscience, the affairs of which, a Christian should endeavour much to know.

5. It is a soul-concerning question, what a Christian should be much in proposing to him- self, *what shall I render unto the Lord for all his bene-*

*fits?* It is certain, we must say, that our Faith and Assurance, and all our other mercies are from him, and yet alace, we are negligent in praises, we may with

*Isaiah* rent our garments of *divers colours*, even the garments of the Kings Daughters, because of spiritual whoredom against God, and our ingratitude to him.

Now having spoken unto you at so great a length, of that precious and foundational grace of faith, we have thought fit to shut up all in speaking a little upon

these words we now have read, concerning the evi-  
F dence



these words we now have read, concerning the  
 dence and assurance of Faith. The Apostle in  
 Chapter is vindicating his Ministry and Apostle  
 from the contempt that was cast upon it, he pro  
 he was a Minister of the New Testament, called  
 sent of God, by the blessing & success he had an  
 them, in that he had not plowed nor threshed in  
 and they being so much in censuring his way,  
 seeking an account of his Ministry: In these wo  
 he doth (as it were) draw them off by a holy di  
 sion unto another business, as if he had said to t  
 O *Corinthians*, I will divert you from the exerci  
 judging me, and will lead you into an exercise  
 is more divine and profitable; be much in jud  
 and examining your selves; and indeed, i  
 truth worth our observation, that if we were  
 in judging of our selves, we would be less in jud  
 others; but alace there are some of us, we are so  
 abroad, that we cannot be much at home.

In the words, there is these six things consider  
 First, that there is such a thing attainable by a C  
 stian while he is here, as a distinct perswasion an  
 surance that he is in the Faith, and hath an int  
 in Christ, by *being in the Faith*; here is not to be un  
 stood a being in the *Doctrine of Faith* only, b  
 is to be understood of principally, being indeed  
 really united to Christ by Faith. Secondly, tha  
 seeking after assurance, is a necessary commanded  
 ty, for ye see here the words are very impera  
*Examine your selves, prove your selves.* Thirdly,  
 there are many mistakes and delusions among peo  
 concerning that noble and excellent thing, *Assur*  
 there being many that keep fast a hope which C  
 shall once discountenance and sweep away: like  
*deers web*, and this is imported in these words,  
*mine your selves*, or as the word may be rend  
*Take an accurate and an experimented search of*

...es, try your selves, or prove your selves; it is a word  
 ... is borrowed from the Gold-smiths fining and try-  
 ... of Gold. And so his putting of the *Corinthians* to  
 ... accurate a search of themselves, saith this clearly  
 ... us, there are many mistakes concerning this thing,  
 ... any do pass a decreet in their own favours, before  
 ... rist hath passed his approbation of them. Fourthly,  
 ... ke notice of this from the words, that there is  
 ... uch and exceeding much advantage, by trying and  
 ... arching whether we be in the faith or no, this is im-  
 ... orted in his doubling the exhortation. Fifthly, That  
 ... e most excellent and spiritual way of attaining assu-  
 ... nce, whether we be in the faith or no; is self-exa-  
 ... mination, and putting our self to the tryal, as if he  
 ... d said, would ye have a distinct perswasion that ye  
 ... e in Christ, then be much in the exercise of self-  
 ... mination. For the rest of the words of the verse,  
 ... e intend not to handle.

As to the first, *That there is such a thing attainable,*  
 ... shall only propose these reasons unto you to make it  
 ... ident, 1. It is known in Scripture that the Saints of  
 ... d have in an ordinary way attained to distinct per-  
 ... asion of their interest in Christ, Song 6. *My be lov-*  
 ... is mine and I am his, and Rom. 8. 38. *I am perswaded*  
 ... ith the Apostle) *that neither death nor life &c. shall*  
 ... able to separate me from the love of God in Christ, and  
 ... Cor. 5. 1. *For we know, if this our earthly tabernacle were*  
 ... ssolved, we have a house with God not made with  
 ... nds, eternal in the heavens. 2. It is the great scope of  
 ... any Scriptures, to shew how Christians may attain  
 ... assurance, 1 Joh. 1. 13. *These things I write unto you*  
 ... at ye may know that ye have eternal life. The great  
 ... ad and design of John, writing in these Epistles, is  
 ... o make a soul acquaint with Christ, and to make  
 ... em to accept of him, and to give them a distinct  
 ... urance that Christ hath accepted them. 3 There



are many commands in Scripture for Christians to be serious in searching after assurance. 2. *Pet. 1. 10. wherefore brethren give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* 4. It is the blessed end of God's oath in the everlasting covenant, that a Christian might get assurance. What was the great ground and great end that God confirmed his Covenant with an oath, was it not? *Heb. 6. 18. That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, ye might have strong consolation.* 5. If assurance of our interest in Christ were not attainable, then these precious graces of joy and love could not be well exercised: a Christian were evermore in the dark concerning his interest in Christ, he could not give obedience to the exhortation, *Rejoyce evermore, again, I say, rejoyce.* 6. The Scripture hath set down these means by which a Christian may win to assurance: as is clear, *1. 3. 18, 19. 2 Pet. 4. 5.* compared with *verse 10.* where the Apostle Peter pressing the Doctrine of making our calling and election sure, he setteth down these excellent means by which they may win to it, and doubtless marks and evidences that are registrate in the Scripture of a gracious state, do assure us, that assurance is attainable. 7. What are the ends of the Sacraments but that our assurance may be confirmed, and that our faith may be strengthened, the two Sacraments are two great Seals of Heaven that are put to the Charter of the Covenant.

Now as to the application, & the more full improvement of this first point, I shall only offer these considerations, 1. I would have it taken notice of, that though grace and assurance be two lovers, yet there is no band of union between them, that the one cannot consist without the other; A Christian may have the real grace of God, and yet walk in darkness and without light; a Christian may be going to Heaven, and yet that word oftentimes in his mouth, *I am cut off*

from thy sight; yea, are there not even some who have had assurance, and some time a day have been admitted to draw that conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*, who are now under darkness concerning their interest, and in much bitterness of spirit, do sometimes cry out, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*. But therefore, let me say this one word, both to weak ones who never had assurance, and deserted ones who have lost it; when ye miss assurance, beware of drawing such negative conclusions concerning your graces, but when ye sit in darkness and see no light, *Trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay your selves upon your God*; that is, when ye cannot reach the faith of assurance, be much in maintaining of adherence: remember *Jobs* divinity, *though thou should kill me, yet will I trust in thee*; and consider that sweet word, *He will keep them in perfect peace whose hearts are stayed on him*.

My second consideration is, That since assurance is attainable, ye would study to find out and remove these things that doth hinder you from attaining unto it. And that we may help you in this, we conceive that the obstructions of a Christians assurance, are especially in these two, 1. Our mistaking of the Lords dealing towards us. And, 2. Our untender and unsuitable dealing towards him.

Of the first sort we shall lay before you these five, the first is, want of favourable returns of prayer; this often maketh a Christian to debate his interest, and call in question his evidences, *Lam. 3. 8.* compared with *verse 18.* *I cry and shout, but he shutteth out my prayers*: and this is the conclusion of that dispensation, *verse 18.* *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*: and this is especially occasioned when the Christian is most serious and fervent in prayer, and when he meeteth not with a return, this maketh them exceedingly debate their interest. And I confess, it is



a sad dispensation to meet with a silent Christ in prayer ; but yet that needeth not make a question all , and debate the reality of his interest in God , since the dearest of all children of the promise have been so dealt with, even a *David*, *Psal. 137. Cryed night and day without silence*, and is not he but cryeth out, *why art thou so far from helping, and the words of my roaring*; yea, that passage may be applied to him who was the root and off-spring of *David*, even he was so dealt with , and had not present sensible return, when he had prayed thrice, *the cup might pass from him*.

Secondly, the want of sensible enlargement and liberty in prayer, that he never goeth to his knees, his heart beginneth to die like a stone within him, he cryeth forth that word, *2 Cor. 3. 17. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty* : and sure if I have the Spirit of the Lord, I would have liberty in the exercise of prayer ; and that this is a rise of the dispensation of our interest is clear from *Psal. 77. 4- compared with verse 7, & 9. saith David, I am sore troubled that I cannot speak*, I have no liberty in prayer, I never find God in prayer, but (as it were) my tongue sticketh to the roof of my mouth; he from hence draweth this conclusion, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and will he in wrath shut up his tender mercies for ever?* I confesse this also is a sad dispensation to meet with an absent and veiled Christ in prayer ; so that we never go to seek God in secret , but we may say this upon our prayers, *He is gone, he is gone*, especially when we have lost that liberty that formerly we have had: and therefore is *David's* perplexity heightened, *verse 5, 6. from his remembering his song in the night* , and his calling to mind the years of affliction: yet we may remember how soon *David* was in his retractions, as to that sad conclusion, *I said in my infirmity*; ver. 10. and so should we do when

on every straitning in prayer, we begin to question all the Lords kindness towards us.

A third obstruction of assurance, is a Christians wrestling with his corruptions painfully and seriously and yet not meeting with any sensible victory over them, but upon the contrair, their corruptions seem to be stronger, and they themselves seem to be weaker, and then it is, they strengthen their misbelief, but that word, *1 Job. 3. 3. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure*: And indeed, this is a knot that is not easily loosed, but when he seeth his idols and corruptions prevailing over him, he will cry out, *I am gone, and there is no hope in Israel concerning this thing*, and yet this also is a word in haste, *Paul* hath registrate himself a standing witness even after he was a chosen vessel, *Rom. 7*. How strangely a child of God may be born down with a body of death even under most serious wrestlings against it; And therefore if thou seriously maintain that combat though thou do not sensibly prevail, thou hast no reason upon that ground to weaken thy assurance.

Fourthly, when a christian is put to more then ordinarily outward affliction, when God doth dispense sadly unto them in outward things, they then begin to call in question their interest, and dispute their assurance, this is clear, by comparing *Lament. 3. verse 18*. with the preceeding words, where speaking of the sad dispensations they meet with, he draweth that conclusion in verse 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*, and *Job. 2. 4*. where he draweth that conclusion from such a promise, *I am now cast out of thy sight*, the Devil he taketh *Eliphaz* divinity and presents it to a Christian; *Call now if there be any to answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou go?* As if he had said, did thou ever know a Christian afflicted, so as thou art afflicted, and so he would have *Job* to quite his integrity; But yet we



know all these blessed ones, for all their afflictions were dear unto the Lord, and had their interest in him, yea, *as many as he loveth, he doth rebuke and chasten*, and it is the bastards and not sons on whom he will not bestow a rod, and therefore we ought not to quarrel our interest because of afflictions.

And lastly, The rise of a Christians discouragement, and that which hindereth their assurance, is, when their former experience of the manifestations of Gods love doth not relish to them, and when the promises which they have built become tasteless unto them, *the white of an egge*, and when they meet not God in Ordinances, but these become lifeless, these three rise together upon them; their case comes very perplexed oftentimes: and this also happened to have been *Dauids case, Ps. 77. When he remembered his song in the night, and the days of old, and had no sweetness in them, then he breaketh forth into these bitter complaints which are there expressed* but yet as we said before, this was his infirmity, there is no reason for a Christian to question his interest upon such account; because the Ordinances are not at all times alike lively even to the best, and the Lord is not always present, but though sometimes *the candle of the Lord doth shine upon his head*, yet at other times he is necessitate to cry out, *O that it were as in months past.*

The second sort of obstructions of a Christians assurance, I mean such as flow from our untender dealing towards God, are,

First, A guilty conscience, that is a remarkable word, *1 Tim. 3, 9. Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience*, It telleth us, that this excellent gift of Faith cannot bide, but in a cleanly lodging, even a pure conscience, and when a Christian setteth about to believe, he will know how a guilty conscience will flee in his face, and cry out, *O adventure not to believe*

are thou believe, the guiltiness of a Christians conscience maketh him oft to cry out, *Touch not the mountain lest thou be thrust thorow*: and I tell you three disadvantages of a guilty conscience, 1. It obstructeth a Christians boldness in making applications to Christ; his heart saith *close*, and his necessity saith *close*; but his guilty conscience cryeth out, *O stand a back and do not close*. 2. A guilty conscience oftentimes it hindreth the discoveries of Christ to the soul, and doth so affright and terrifie, yea, it will so sting and bite us, that when he revealeth himself, we cannot take notice, when he would lay on a plaister, our souls will tear it off, and refuse to be comforted. 3. It doth exceedingly obstruct our going about duty. O but our soul moves slowly in the paths of God when we are under the power of a guilty conscience.

The second obstruction is, That we are not much in the exercise of tenderneſs. O but if a Christian were tender, and if in every step of his life he desired to set Christ before his eyes, he would easily win to much assurance, according to that word, *Isai, 64. 5. Thou meetest him that rejoycest and worketh righteousness, and these shall remember thee in thy ways*; Would ye know the assured Christian, it is the tender Christian: that Christian that doth not crucifie convictions, the Christian that breaketh not resolutions, the Christian that doth not fit calls and opportunities to prayer, the Christian that saith not of any sin, *it is a little one*, or the Christian that searcheth always, watcheth always, examineth always, and is always casting out sin, and that is the assured Christian.

The third objection is, The want of the exercise of the grace of fear, we are not much under this disposition, to fear the Lord and his goodness: this is clear from that word, *Psal. 25. 14. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, and he will shew to



them his Covenant. I think there are these two evidences, that much of the power of godliness is from some of our hearts: we fear God no more, we were his companion: and we fear our selves more nor if we had not a deceitful heart within us; we neither fear God nor our selves, and that speaks that much of the life of Religion is lost amongst us. The fifth thing that doth much obstruct our assurance is, much *worldly-mindedness*, and eager pursuit of the things of a present life, that is remarkable, 2 Cor. 4. verse last, compared with 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We look not to the things that are seen*, that is, we are not much taken up with the things of a present world, which men of the world seek and delight themselves in; it is subjoyned, *For we know if this our earthly house this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands*, so we see assurance and mortification of the world are much knit together. Would ye know where to find our hearts, the most part of us are conversing with idols of the world; would ye know where to find our hearts, they are amongst the vanities of the world. Oh how true is that word, *Psa. 39. Man walks in vain shew*; what is man in all his actings, but as walking in a long galery that is set about with pictures, gazing on these things and saluting them all, as if they were living *Kings and Queens*, and great persons that could do him good; & so our pursuing after the world is nothing else but a *dead shadow* pursuing after shadows, a man that is but a short living shadow pursuing after vanity and nothing, and thus he fools away his time, forgetting to make sure the one thing necessary.

5. Want of distinct apprehensions of these three, infinite love of Christ, the infinite power of Christ, the infinite wisdom of Christ; there is not an object of O christians that ye have from the multitude of your sins, but it may be drowned in infinite love, there

not an objection that ye have from the strength of your idols, but it may be drowned in that immense ocean of the infinite power of Christ; there is not an objection ye have from your wants, or about your evil nature, but ye may drown it in the infinite wisdom & goodness of Christ, and there can be nothing against your assurance, but may be sweetly answered also from these rightly applyed, taken up and rested on by the soul. The last thing which hindereth our assurance is, the smalness of the measure of grace that we have attained; for when grace is smal, it is hard to be discerned, and therefore, if ye would have assurance, learn not to lye still and dispute, but to rise up and to increase our stock, and then you shall know ye are rich: *Grow in grace and in the knowledge of God*, and by this, *ye shall know if ye follow on to know the Lord*.

The third consideration is, that assurance is not bestowed at all times, but there are some special times and seasons when God giveth a Christian a broad sight of his interest, and I shall but name these.

The first is, when he is first converted, and Christ and he joyns hands together, even then sometimes the best robe is put upon the prodigal son, and the fatted calf is killed, and a ring is put upon his hand, and shooes upon his feet, *Acts 9. 17. Paul meeteth with assurance immediately after his conversion, 1 Jo. 2. 12, 14. I write unto you little children, because ye have known the Father*; and before that in the 12. verse, *I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you*; so that when a Christian is brought unto Christ, he will (as it were) lead them to the Registers of Heaven, and say, friend come and see, here is your name written from eternity: But do not mistake me, I do not say this is always so, but these whom Christ converteth through the thunderings of the Law, these most frequently meet with intimation of the pardon of their sins & peace of God, even at their first



acquaintance, I know there are some Christians, if ye ask at them when they were begotten to a lively hope, they would say that word that the blind man once said, *One thing I know, I was once blind, but now I see* but for the time & the day, I know not when it was.

The second time is, when they are wrestling with God like Princes in prayer, and watching unto the exercise, *Dan. 9. 23.* compared with the preceeding verse, he being much and serious in prayer, doth meet with that word from heaven: *O man, greatly beloved* as the word is, *O man of desires*, and *Acts 10. 2.* when *Cornelius* is much in the exercise of watching and prayer, he seeth a vision, and getteth intimation of his peace with God; and *Jacob* when he was wrestled with God, *Gen. 32.* he hath that testimony given him, *Thou hast as a Prince wrestled with God and thou hast prevailed.*

The third thing is, when a Christian is passing through the gates of death, and is upon the borders of Eternity: I desire not to be mistaken in this matter; I know some Christians are led to heaven through a dark trance, so as they never see a blink of the countenance of Christ, until the day come that they get him in their arms eternally within his Father's house. Some Christians when they go through the gates of death, they may be disputing of this question *Where am I going?* But this is certain, that sometimes Christ will dispense a broad field of a Christians interest unto him at the day of death. *2 Sam. 35. 5.* when was it that *David* sang that song which hath strengthened thousands in the very hour of death, *God hath made with me an everlasting covenant*, was it not when death was shaking hands with him? and *2 Tim. 4. 8.* when was it that *Paul* sang that song, *I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, henceforth is laid for me a crown of righteousness*, was it not even at the hour of death?

When he was ready to depart, and to be offered up? And when was it when old Simeon did sing that blessed song, Luk. 2: 29. Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, was it not within a step of death, as it were, he went to heaven with Christ in his arms, or rather in his heart he carried Christ with him, and found Christ before him, and so death to Simeon was a change of his place, and not a change of his company.

The fourth time is, when he is to be put to some hard and difficult duty: Before Abraham be put to forsake his native land, and become a stranger and a wanderer, he meeteth with sweet intimation of his interest, Gen. 12: 2. *I will make of thee a great nation, and* verse 7. *The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and before Jeremiah be sent a preacher unto a rebellious people, he will have that word spoken unto him, I know thee before thou wast brought forth.*

The fifth time is, when a Christian hath done some singular act of obedience, when Abraham had obeyed the Lord, and was content to offer up his Isaac, he meeteth with a sight of his interest and covenant renewed to him with an oath, Gen. 22: 16. *By my self I have sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withholden thy son, even thy only son, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee as the stars of heaven.*

The sixth time is, when a Christian is to meet with hard tryals, difficulties and afflictions in the world, then they usually meet with assurance, and so Gen. 28: 14, 15, 16. before Jacob go to serve Laban, he meeteth with intimation of his peace with God.

The seventh time is, when a Christian is under sad persecution and affliction, then will the Lord give a word from heaven to comfort him, and assure him of his fatherly love and mercy: When was it that Christ left that noble Legacy to his disciples, Job. 14.



verse 27. *My peace I leave with you, my peace I leave with you*, was it not when he himself was to leave the troublesome and sorrowful days, in a perfect world.

The eighth time is at some solemn Ordinance approaches to God, the days of a Communion to a dear Christian have been sweet days, when Christ come to the soul, and said, *Behold me, behold me*. In the eleven Apostles met with much assurance of interest in Christ at the Communion they were with him: O what sweet intimations were *This is my body which is broken for you, and this is the new Testament in my blood shed for you*, a little after, *you are they which have continued with me in my tentation, and I appoint unto you a Kingdom*.

We come now to the second point which we proposed from the words, *viz.* That as assurance is a thing which may be attained; so to seek after it, is a necessary duty: let me not be mistaken, as if I said, the having of assurance were simply necessary to Salvation; no, that were a Doctrine as comfortable upon the other hand, as the Popish doctrine of impossibility of assurance is upon the other: But the thing I say, is, that the Christian seeking after assurance, and his real endeavouring to attain unto it, is a necessary command of God, which he hath bound upon the consciences of his Children among other gospel duties; And certainly, we need go no further in the clearing of this than the Text it self, what meaneth these peremptory injunctions, *Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith or not: Prove your selves. Know ye not, &c.* but if ye will ye may add the word, 2 Pet. 1. verse 5, and 10. compared, what can be more expressly commanded, and more strongly pressed, than that Christians should bend their most endeavours for attaining unto this blessed con-

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dition of assurance: Give diligence, yea, give all diligence, yea, the rather give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.

From this, we shall only lay before you these considerations, 1. If the seeking after assurance be a necessary duty, then these three things are most lamentable. First, That there are so many in this generation who are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their iniquity; they flatter themselves with a rotten assurance, that hath no other foundation but their own imagination, they never knew since the first day they were Baptized and did begin to profess Christ, what it was to mortifie one lust, nor seriously to wrestle against one temptation, and yet they want not a strong perswasion of their interest in Christ: But ah, will ye stand in awe, lest ye meet with such a dreadful disappointment, as (when ye think ye are in the very gate of heaven) even then to fall backwards to the very bottom of hell, and when ye expect a kindly welcome from the Lord of Glory, as one who thinks you have been in covenant with him this many years, yet meet with that dreadful summons, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not.*

2. How sad may we be upon this account, that howbeit assurance be an attainable thing, and a great many dare not say they have attained it; yet so little diligence is used in pursuing after it; is it not very lamentable, that many of you to whom I am speaking, since first ye gave up your names to Christ in a visible way, and were reputed amongst the generation of the seekers of his face, scarce ever set a day or an hour apart to examine whether ever indeed you were in Christ or not. Alas, is heaven of so little moment, is the having or wanting all the enjoyments which are there of so small concernment to you, that you will not be at the pains as once to enquire after your interest in the matter? what if any of you were but possessors of a  
thou



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thousand pound , and your interest or right uncertain and questionable, would not your sleep part from you, and your rest be unquiet till you made it more secure? What think you shall the of this generation answer in the day of the Lord neglecting *that one thing necessary* ; when they have been so vexing themselves *about many things*, and have been so serious in so many consultations to make a worm-eaten portion in a perishing world, that whole wit of men and angels cannot secure for a moment? It is certain, the root of all sloathfulness is Atheism. It is not possible that we believe as really there is a heaven, as we believe there is an earth, that the world to come is as real as that which is present; or else it must be a strange power in these hearts that keeps us captive , that we are never suffered to think upon eternity, nor to ask where we must lodge when this cottage we carry about shall fall about our ears. O will ye think upon it, how serious and pressing that command is, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Give all diligence, to make your calling and election sure.* When the Lord says *Give all diligence*, will ye give no diligence, and when he saith, *make your calling and election sure* , will ye leave all upon uncertainty? *I said to the foolish do not so foolishly.*

3. It is most lamentable, that since assurance is attainable, yet men live contentedly under the want thereof. How strange is it that many are so seldom on their knees complaining of their uncertainty? If Christ were precious unto you, would it be so? I am sure there are some of us here that have had the name of Christian. I know not how long, that never had one sad thought about the want of assurance: when we look upon the desolations, vastations and plunderings in the world, how many of us can cry out, *They have taken away our gods, and what have I more?* But when we speak of heaven, we care not who deprive us of our portion there.

here. I will not limit the Lord, nor determine what he may do, but believe it, it is one to a thousand, if many christians of this age have a pleasant night & comfortable closing of their eyes, they are such undervaluers of assurance: I may fear that lamentation shall be heard upon the death-beds of many, *O poor wretched wandering soul where art thou going?* and it is no wonder it come to this, when we are so long in beginning to ask the question. And now I close with this one thing, that I think beyond all question, the souls that live contentedly under the want of assurance, are the careless daughters that dwelleth at ease: Christ and they are at a remarkable distance, it must be a cold winter and dark night (at best) as to their present fellowship with God.

A second consideration from this point is, that if the seeking after assurance be so necessary a duty, then let me beseech you to ponder with your selves what means are fit for you to use that ye may attain it, and if ye enquire what these means are, I shall only lay before you some few,

1. That ye would be much in the exercise of faith, I mean the direct acts of faith, whereby the sinners from his sense and feeling of his wants, layeth hold on Jesus Christ, closing with him, and leaning upon him for a full supply out of his fulness: for indeed, there are two great faults amongst the Lords people, some do seek assurance of faith, before ever they seek to have faith. 2. Some are much more taken up in debating their evidences, whether they be real or not, then they are in strengthening their evidences, so that most of their time is spent in questioning; O! is this a real evidence of assurance? whereas more actual believing in Christ and gripping to the promises, and less disputing, were the shorter and surer way, that word is most clear, *Eph. 1. 13. After ye believed, ye were sealed with the spirit of promise, that is, ye got assurance.*



assurance, but not before ye believed, and ye know  
is said, *Mat. 9. 2.* And when Jesus saw their faith, he  
son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee, so  
it is clear, that to be much in believing, is the neare  
way to assurance.

2. Ye would be much in believing the general truths  
and promises of the Gospel, and frequently meditating  
of them; al assurance is by a practical sylogism; the  
whereof must needs be a Scripture truth; And certainly,  
the firm assent to that truth, and the souls delightful  
meditation on it, is often blessed of the Lord, a  
special mean whereby the conscience is helped  
make the assumption, and also to bring forth  
conclusion; For instance, we see with what strength  
of affection Paul setteth his faith on that word, *1 Tim.*  
*1. 15.* *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation,*  
*Christ Jesus came to save sinners,* and presently  
see what followeth on it, *Of whom I am the chief,* then  
his assurance; for doubtless he meant that he  
the chief of saved sinners; yea, certainly, a sinner  
exercising himself, will often find so much sweetness  
in the general truths, that he cannot but put to  
own name.

3. Be diligent in the exercise of all spiritual graces  
and Christian duties, that this is among the best means  
of attaining to assurance, is manifest from *2 Pet. 1.* *Give*  
*all diligence to make your calling and election sure*  
for indeed it is very observable, that the diligence  
there mentioned, is not a diligence in disputing or  
questioning about our election; but a diligence in the  
practice of duties and graces, as is clear from verse  
*5.* *Give all diligence* (saith the Apostle) *Wherefore*  
*in adding to your faith vertue, to your vertue knowledge*  
*& to knowledge temperance, &c.* and then verse *8.*  
*ye do all these things, ye shall neither be barren nor*  
*fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ:*  
doth not say in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus

Christ simply, but of *our* Lord Jesus; importing that the result of diligence in these graces, shall be the knowledge of Christ as ours, and of our interest in him; and when he addeth (upon the other hand) *he that taketh these things, is blind and cannot see afar off*, this is, we cannot see far in any spiritual matter, and so not in the matter of his interest. O therefore, think not that we will get assurance by lying down with the slug-gard upon your bed, or by your formal prayer, or your anxious debates, but if ever ye come to assurance, ye must be striving, as in an agony, for so the word importeth, which is used to express our diligence in Christian duties.

4. As ye would be diligent, so if ever ye would come to assurance, ye would be tender and circumspect in your walking, that is a clear word, *Pf. 50. last verse, To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God, and Is. 32. The effect of righteousness is peace and assurance for ever.* Ah the untender walk that many of us have: It is no wonder to see us walk in darkness, such stinking gross vapors that arise off our conversation, cannot but engender clouds that hinder us from seeing God, and certainly such pearls as *Assurance*, is not given to dogs and swine lest they tread upon them.

### SERMON VIII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine yourselves whether ye be in the Faith? prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.*

**T**Here are two great ballances into which men do weigh themselves; there are some that weigh themselves in the ballance of deceit, who think that in all their labours there is no iniquity to be found, yet God who is the weigher of the spi-



spirit, when he shall weigh them will engrave upon their forehead, *Thou art weighed in the balance and art found light*: O but there are many who prove themselves, whom Christ shall never approve. There are many that call God *Father*, whom he will not call *Children*, and many that call Christ *Husband*, whom he will not call *Spouse*. 2. There are some who weigh themselves in the ballance of the Sanctuary who upon solid and most spiritual grounds do draw this conclusion, *I am my beloveds*, and his desire is towards me, who can with boldness and confidence look into Christ in the face, and say, *thou art mine*, and with much spiritual confidence, take him in their arms, and cry out, he shall be eternally mine; and sure there is not a more pleasant life than to be taking him every day in our arms, and to be crying out, *Am I not made up in him*, am I not made up in him.

Before I come to the words, there are three great and most soul-concerning errors amongst the Christians of these days, that we desire ye may consider. 1. There are many that are more desirous to know what they are, then what they should do; there are some are more taken up to know whether they be justified and sanctified, then to be indeed justified and sanctified; and they are more desirous to know if they be in Christ, then indeed to be in him: and therefore we find many who do spend a great deal more time disputing that question, *whether am I in Christ or not*, then they do in using of these means by which real union and communion with him may be attained. But oh, will ye once study more to be in him, and that shall be the shortest way to attain to the knowledge of your being in him. The second great error is, that some are more desirous to know what they should do, then they are desirous to do what they know. Are there not many of us that have the

question, *wherewith shall I come before the Lord*, and yet we do not know his Commandment is with us, that we should do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. A third error is, that we are more in talking of Christ, then in believing in him, or closing with him; Some of us think to win to heaven by discourses, if we can talk of Christ, we think all is without debate or controversie; but alace, there are many who are sweet talkers of Christ, that are cursing him this day in Hell. And I would say this by the way, if there be any of you, that have win to my soul - perswasion of your interest in Christ, I intreat you if ye can put the conclusion upon record, that in such a day of such a month, and such a year of God, you did then win to cry out, *I am my beloveds, and he is mine*; it seemeth to have been Davids practice, *Psal. 16. 2. O my soul thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord*; and it was Jeremiahs practice, *Lam. 31. 24. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul*, I say, ye should even mark that conclusion as they did, that when tentations come, and begin to assault you, you may look to your record that ye have set down, and be ashamed to misbelieve. It is true, that for a little while our assurance at best will be but ebbing and flowing, but I hope ere long we shall be above the reach of misbelief, and above the reach of fears, I hope ere long we shall dispute no more, we shall be jealous no more, and we shall question our interest no more, when all our disputings and questionings shal be sweetly drowned in that infinite ocean of eternal delight and fruition of God. O *expectants of heaven, expectants of heaven*, are ye not looking after this day, are ye not looking after it: I know not what we do here, if we be not walking forward every day: he is upon his way, O to see him, we will even stand and wonder at him: I hope the day is coming when we shall never lose our grips of Christ any more,



more, he is coming, he is coming; and I think if Christ would give a pass, we would long to go hence; what streets are these that are there, is there any here who is groaning for heaven, be of good comfort. I hope ere long he shall come, he shall come and wipe all tears from your eyes.

Now at the last occasion, when we spake upon these words, we told you that there was five or six things which we intended to consider in them. The first was, that such a thing as a distinct and well grounded perswasion of our interest in Christ was attainable and of this we have already spoken. The second thing is, That concerning this noble and excellent thing assurance, there are many mistakes among the people of God, & to make this evident, it is clear first in the Text, from that serious & accurate search in this matter, which the Apostle putteth these people unto, and we cleared unto you from the force of the words, by his doubling of these exhortations, *try your own selves, prove your own selves.* 2. From the many commands which the Lord hath left upon record that we should not be mistaken concerning our assurance, 1 Cor. 13. 18. *Let no man deceive himself.* Gal. 6. 3. *If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself,* and therefore doth the Apostle add *Let every one prove his own work,* and verse 7. *Be not deceived.* 3. The point is clear from this, that we find in Scripture many who have been mistaken most dreadfully in the matter of their assurance, Hos. 8. 1. *Israel cryeth out, my God we know thee,* and yet Israel was in a great mistake: for in the words following, ver. 2. *Israel had cast off the thing that was good:* and Pro. 30. 12. we find there a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed away from their iniquities. 4. It is clear from this, that it is a great delusion, of Satan, the great deceiver, that we might be mistaken

know

en about that noble & weighty point of our assurance, if being in Christ: is there not a power given unto him from Christ to deceive the nations? I may say, that in no point doth he more prevail to deceive us then in this, if profanity kill its *thousands*, delusion kills ten *thousands*, and this delusion its *twenty thousands*. Lastly, both not this prove how much a Christian may be mistaken in the matter of his assurance, even that name which is given to our hearts, *Jer. 17. 9. It is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can now it?* no doubt this may shew us (though there were no more) how ready our hearts are to deceive us, making us to entertain a delusion in stead of truth, and imbrace a shadow instead of a substance.

The next thing that we have to speak to you upon this point, is to show you where these mistakes do ly, and what are these false grounds by which so many do deceive their own souls in this matter; and here there are two sorts of persons whom we must inform. 1. There be some who upon most unwarrantable grounds do conclude; that their interest in Christ is sure, when indeed it is not. 2. There be some (upon the other hand) who from ~~the~~ mistakes of themselves and the Lords dealing towards them, deny that they have an interest, when indeed they have. The first sort are the worst, and in the most dangerous condition, and they build upon these six false foundations which we beseech them to consider.

The first is, their supposed sensible enjoyments, some Christians in these times especially, do meet with some flashes of light & joy which they have not been (it may be) acquainted with before, or at least not in such a measure, or in such a sensible manner, and upon this they presently cry forth, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*. I shall not dispute with such about the reality of these enjoyments, or how they come to know that these are such as proceed from a saving work



work of the Spirit of grace, but waving that desire, give me leave to say this much of all enjoyments, sensible manifestations (as to the point in hand) may be sometime a good supporter to underprop christians assurance when it tottereth, but never a foundation whereon he may lay the first stone of building: and therefore he is the wiser christian, first tryeth the reality of his interest in Christ by the blessed fruits of righteousness and holiness, before he trust the reality of sensible enjoyments, how sweet or comfortable soever they may seem to be.

2. Some build their assurance upon the number and bulk of their duties, without considering the frame of their spirit, and the principle from which they flow. they use prayer, & reading, and conference, they are upon ordinances, & are always there where the means is thought to be most powerful: and upon this they take up themselves in their own arms, blessing themselves, as that poor man, *Luke 18. I fast twice a week, I pay tithes of all that I possess:* but alace, they do not consider that they do but build their houses upon the sand, which the first blast of a temptation will overturn, because not only all our duties when weighed in ballance may be found light, but when put to the tryal may be found empty, dead and lifeless things, wherein the Lords soul can have no pleasure.

3. Some are mistaken in the matter of their assurance, by judging themselves by the law, not knowing or not regarding the spiritual meaning thereof: Paul was a gallant man (in his own apprehension) when he was without the law, that is, when he knew not the spiritual meaning of the law, he thought himself the most eminent Saint in all his Nation, & as he shewed us, *Phil. 3.* he could compare with any of them, when the Lord opened his eyes, we see he put himself last in the roll of Saints, and first in the roll of sinners, *Rem. 7. He was alive without the Law, that*

he thought himself living and reigning above his sins ; but when the Commandment came, that is, when it came to his knowledge, and he saw the spirituality of it, *sin revived and he died*, then he saw how that he had triumphed before the victory, he saw all his sins alive, and as it were, risen from the dead, and himself a dead man, lost and undone in the estate he was in. O how many are there amongst us in *Pauls* first condition? *live without the Law*. O how many destroy themselves with this, they think there is not a sin forbidden in the Law of God but only Ten, but alace, thou fool, thou erreſt in this not knowing the Scriptures : Shouldst thou not judge thy self by that spiritual extent of the meaning of the Law, & that divine commentary which the Apostle *James* hath set forth upon it, wherein he sheweth thee, *That if thou be guilty of the breach of one point, thou art guilty of all*; and by that infallible exposition which Christ himself the blessed Law-giver hath set down, *Mat. 6.* whereby he discovereth adultery in the heart and in the eye. O atheist, thou must take up the ten Commandments, & subscribe *guilty* to them all: and let me tell you this, if ye will subscribe the Law to Christ, He will subscribe the Gospel to you; if thou shalt sincerely say, *I am guilty*, he will as sincerely say, *I have pardoned*; Son or Daughter be of good courage, *thy sins are forgiven thee*.

Fourthly, Some build their assurance upon the apprehensions of the hatred of some particular sin, that they think it was sometimes as their right hand, or their eye, but now they can pluck it out, or cut it off: But O, will you but consider, some sins may be made weak, & the heart (though not upon a right principle) brought to hate and to cry unto it, *get you hence*, and yet the interest of Satan may be strong in the heart. The fifth mistake of many who judge themselves, because they go a greater length than the former, and are kept free from gross outbreaching sin; how many are there who go



sleeping down to hell with this ; I am no drunkard  
 nor adulterer,,nor murderer,no thief nor whore  
 long have I lived in the town , and they were ne-  
 born that can say, I have wronged them;and so  
 adventure their soul upon this,they never commit  
 any gross sin.I beseech you be not deceived:remember  
 how that wretched man did speed, *Luke 18. 11.*  
*no extortioner , nor adulterer,nor even as this publican*  
*&c.* poor creature that he was , Christ giveth  
 testimonial to every one who take it for themselves  
 I must tell some of you , that there may be desperate  
 atheists without God,and without Christ in the world  
 & yet be free from gross out-breaking sins; I do not mean  
 but many of these who crucified the Lord of Glory  
 were kept from other gross sins; what knowest thou  
 O man that there is more favour shewed to thee  
 that thou art kept from some gross sins, when  
 thou hast a desperately wicked heart, then is shewed  
 to the devil, when some links of his chain are broken  
 in, and restraining power keeping him from his  
 most bounds, God will sometimes restrain a hypocrite  
 or a heathen, as it was said of *Abimelech*, and *God*  
*restrained him*: there may be a cord put upon thy  
 when thou art far from having the power of con-  
 veying grace, it may be also, that all that abstaining  
 outward out-breakings, proceedeth but from outward  
 disadvantages, & not from any fear of God, or respect  
 to him, yea, not so much as from the fear of any  
 corporal punishment : are there not many amongst us  
 believe it, there are many that take away shame, or  
 Church-censure; or civil punishment, and other  
 conveniencies of that sort, and set a thousand hills  
 before them, they would not be kept back from  
 sin, but would take their hazard of them all: Yea, we  
 not want of temptation and nothing else, that hindereth  
 many from gross out-breakings; if Satan would  
 but with a kindled match, there wanteth no more

thy tongue and hands, and all on fire of hell. O wretched soul, do but ask thy self how often thou hast tempted Satan, when he would not tempt thee, and how often thou hast followed a temptation when it fled from thee; yea, when the Lord hath hedged up thy ways that thou could not overtake thy lovers, how many a long look hast thou sent after them, & what lustings of thy spirit within, and do ye thing that heart sins are nothing, although thou had no out-breakings, what were the matter of that: if thou had not a tongue, thou couldst break the third Command, and *curse God in thy heart*; if thou had not an eye, thou couldst commit adultery *in thy heart*: if thou had not a hand thou couldst commit murder *in thy heart*. O therefore build not thy assurance upon this, that thou hast made clean the outside of the platter when yet all filthiness is within. The sixth false foundation upon which I am sure too many build their assurance, is their gifts and talents, especially upon these two, the gift of Prayer, and the gift of Knowledge; but believe it, it is not much to be a Christian in tongue, but it is much to be a Christian in heart; know you not that this will cast out many, *we have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name we have cast out devils*. No doubt these had been excellent labourers, and if the tongue would have done it, they would have been highly advanced, but yet ye see these men depart with a *depart from me, I know you not*. Ah think upon it, he is not the best Christian that is the best talker. Religion that is pure, and undefiled, consisteth more in the affection, then in the tongue, and more in practice then in profession. I beseech you when you cast up your evidences of assurance, consider how well you have done, and not how well ye have spoken.

The seventh false ground whereby many do misjudge themselves, is, their supposed peace of conscience: O faith one, my conscience doth not charge me



with any thing, I thank God I have a quiet mind and nothing troubles me; but ah poor wretch, wilt thou tell me, may not the strong man be within, and therefore all is at peace? a dumb conscience and a sear'd conscience, is a dreadful plague. Knowest thou not that many say, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart: and because they say so, the Lord shall not spare them, but all the curses in this Book shall lye upon them.

The eighth false ground is, the approbation of other christians, so that if they have the approbation of some such exercised christians, or if they have the approbation of such a Minister, that is the way to silence their disputings. O cursed be the person that putter his trust in men who are liars; O man or woman, let me assure you this, if ye had a Testimonial to present to Christ subscribed with all the hands of every Christian that ever ye were acquainted with, this will be enough for Christ to reject you and it both, *I know you not, and therefore depart from me.* There is an emphasis in that word: *I know you not*, as if he had said, it is not much though all others know you, if I know you not.

The ninth false ground is their diligent observing the Ordinances, their going to preachings, and their going to Communion, *and running too and fro*, pretending this end *that knowledge may be increased*; but know it, there are many that have sitten down at table with Christ here, that shall never sit down at the higher Table with him hereafter: Are there not many that shall say unto Christ in the great day, *Have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence, unto whom Christ shall say, depart from me I know you not.*

The tenth false foundation, which is the strong delusion of Atheists, of which, no doubt there are many here to day, is the building of their eternal happiness upon this, I never met with a cross, I never knew what it was to have a sad day: but to thee I shall only say, it

may be thou never had a joyful day, neither in all thy  
fioful pleasures under the Sun; but let me tell thee, it  
is bad divinity to conclude, therefore I am in the way  
to heaven: It may be it were better reasoning, (and  
thogh I wil not say it, yet it cometh nearer truth) I had  
never a cross, therefore I am going on in the way to  
hel. O wilt thou but consider, what if he be *heaping*  
*coals upon thy head, and fatting thee to the day of slaugh-*  
*ter?* What if this word be your portion? *Eat, drink and*  
*be merry while you are here, for to morrow thou must cer-*  
*tainly die;* what are all your pleasures, and what are  
all your honours, and what are all your possessions?  
What are they all? are they not a bone cast unto a dog?  
the Lord valueth them not, What if they be *the fat-*  
*ting of you to the day of slaughter?*

Now as to these who deny they have any interest in  
Christ, when indeed they have, they commonly de-  
ceive themselves and vex their own spirits upon some  
of these or the like mistakes. 1. some judge of their e-  
state, by their present frame and condition, so that if  
they be in an evil frame, they begin & raze the founda-  
tions, & to such I would only say, that every change of  
condition doth not speak a change of estate, a child  
of God may be in much darkness & under much dead-  
ness, and yet a child of God still, *Psal. 73.* It was an e-  
vil frame to be as a beast before God, and yet even  
then he keepeth grips and holdeth him by the right  
hand: *Job* was often in a very evil frame, and yet he  
holdeth fast his integrity, and why then should thou  
upon that account cast away thine?

2. Christians judge their estate by dispensations,  
they think every change of dispensations, speaketh a  
change of estate, and if Christ do not smile always, we  
know not what it is to keep up the Faith of our inte-  
rest: and indeed this is a great fault among Christians,  
that when they cannot read love in the beautiful face  
of Christ, they think it is not in his heart. What thogh



he change his dispensation, doth that speak for a  
of thy estate? Christ cannot change his voice to us  
we think he changeth his heart, Christ cannot spe  
to us in the whirle wind; but we cry out, why art thou  
become unto me as an enemy? O shall precious Christ  
be thus mistaken.

The third ground of mistake about our interest  
Christ is, that we judge of our estate by what we are  
in our selves, and not by what we are in Christ. When  
a Christian beginneth to judge & search himself, he  
find nothing in himself; but what is the matter  
doubting, & therefore thinks it high presumption  
think himself a Believer: But O fool, can thou  
look to Christ, and cry out, though in my self I be  
nothing, yet in him I am all; O if Christians knew to judge  
of themselves, by what they are in Christ, and not  
what they are in themselves, that with one eye they  
might look to themselves, & cry out, *I am undone*, and  
with another look to Christ, & cry out, *There is hope*  
*Israel concerning me*, that is, with one eye they might  
look to themselves, & *blush*, and with another eye they  
might look to Christ, and *hope*, that with one eye they  
might look to themselves & *weep*, & with another eye  
they might look to Christ and *rejoyce*. O Christian wilt  
thou judge alway of thy self by what thou art in Christ  
and not by what thou art in thy self; yea, I would say  
this to thee by the way, when thou meetest with ten-  
tations that put thee to dispute thy interest, do but  
send them to Christ to get an answer, and say, O pre-  
cious Christ answer this temptation, for this is Christ's  
way with the soul, the law must bring us back to Christ  
and Christ must send us back to the law & deliver us  
over to it, not to the condemning power of it as be-  
fore, but the directing and guiding power of it as a  
rule of holiness; so that a Christians whole life must be  
a sweet & constant travelling between Christ and the  
Law; when thou hast broken the Law, flie unto Christ  
to

to take away the guilt, and when thou hast done so, Christ, come running out again in his strength to perform the Law.

The fourth mistake is, that Christians judge of their estate by the measure of their graces, more nor by the sincerity of them, some Christians if they find not love in such a degree, and if they find not repentance in such a degree, immediatly they begin and raze the foundations, and do call their enjoyments delusions; and their faith presumption, and their mortification hypocrisie; but I must say this to thee, we should not only weigh our graces in the ballance, but try them also by the touch-stone, for the smallest piece of gold is gold, and the least degree of faith; is alike precious faith, with what the Apostles themselves had.

The fifth ground of mistake among Christians is this, that they compare themselves more unto the Saints, then they judge of themselves by the Word. O faith one, if I were like *David*, I would believe, but I am not like *David*, nor *Job*, nor *Hezekiah*: and therefore there is none of the Saints to which I should go, & if I should call, there is none to answer, and why then should I believe? I wold only say to thee whose objection that is, it is even *Dauids* objection, *Pf. 22. 5, 6. Our fathers trusted in thee; O they were excellent men, but what man am I? A worm and not a man, & yet he was put from that objection: and I would say this, are ye below him, in what? I hope ye are not below David in necessity; Now though ye be below him in grace, if ye be not below him in necessity, ye have so much the more right to believe; for as we said before, necessity giveth you a right, & the more necessity, the greater right to believe.*

The sixth ground is, that Christians judge of their estate by Christs part of the Covenant, & not by their own, rather examining themselves by what Christ hath promised to do for them, then by what is left to them to do, which thing if it were heeded, would put a close to many of our mistakes, and disputings. G 4. Ha-



*The Path of Assurance.*  
Having now laid out some mistakes upon eiraham  
hand, the next we would do is, to propose some co hea  
fiderations to press you to guard against these there  
stakes, especially the first.

And the first consideration is, that mistakes abo Th  
ones interest in Christ, and assurance, is a most univ ke a  
sal and popular evil. it is not one of a City, nor two heir  
a family, but many are mistaken in their interest dece  
Christ; that word, *Pro. 30. 12. There is a generation th* uit o  
*are pure in their own eyes*, and yet is not cleansed fr frequ  
*their iniquity*, it is not one or two that are under the belie  
mistake, but it is a generation, and I suppose there a del  
many of us, that are of this tribe and generation, *Mat. the*  
*7. 22. He saith, many in that day shall say unto me Lord, they b*  
*Lord, and have we not prophesied, and yet he shall say whers*  
*to them, I know you not:* since it is so universal a mistake, ers o  
I intreat you, be much in the search of your selves wel  
search your own selves; certainly I think, if there were t la  
but within this Church one that were under this more p  
stake, it should put us all to this, *Master is it I, Master Fo*  
*is it I?* but how much more since there is a genera nter  
tion of mistakers, should it not be our exercise every isac  
day to cry out, *is it I?* s ur

The second consideration is, that as it is a most u tin  
niversal, so also it is a most irrecoverable mistake. if y  
mistake about this, your being in Christ, there is no hre  
making up of that mistake, if once ye pass the border wh  
of Time with this lie in your right hand, I am in Christ ho  
there is no hope of recovery, eternity will cut off all on  
access to make up mistake: I intreat you go not down e  
to your grave with this, I am in Christ, when yet ha  
Christ may say, I know you not: I believe it, if ye could io  
have a testimonial subscribed by the hands of all the ow  
most eminent and tender Christians that ye have an  
known, that ye are indeed a Saint, and if all the Mi n  
nisters that ever you spoke to, should praise you in the s  
gate, and declare you to be a son and daughter of A- g  
braham

aham; yet when you shall bring up your testimonial  
to heaven, and the Father shall read it, and shall ask you  
where is my Sons Name, if it be not there, it will cer-  
tainly be rejected, and cast over the bar.

Thirdly, It is a soul-destroying delusion, this mis-  
take about ones interest in Christ, is the very ruine of  
their immortal soul, according to that word, *Is. 44. 20.*  
*A deceived heart hath led them aside*, and what is the  
fruit of it, so that he cannot deliver his soul, and by con-  
sequence it may be said, that they destroy their soul;  
believe it, there be many that go to hell in a chariot  
of delusion; we know some Christ guideth to heaven  
by the gates of hell, and letteth them not see life, till  
they be in sight of hell; but it is true also, there are o-  
thers whom the devil guideth to hel by the very bor-  
ders of heaven; he maketh them believe they are  
dwelling in the gates of heaven all their days, and yet  
at last they are thrust down to these habitations that  
are prepared for the devil and his angels.

Fourthly, if once a person be mistaken about their  
interest in Christ, they will have these three notable  
disadvantages attending upon them; 1. As long as he  
is under this mistake, he is without all reach of pro-  
fitting by the Ordinances, for when he heareth preach-  
ing, he will apply promises when he should apply  
threatnings; & upon the other hand, apply threatnings  
when he should apply promises, and so that which  
should be his medicine, becometh poison to him. 2. As  
long as he is under this mistake, it maketh him that  
he cannot pity nor have compassion upon himself,  
that though he be the most suitable object of compas-  
sion, yet he knows not what it is to weep over his  
own ruine. 3. Readily all his graces are but delusions,  
and all his good motions are but flashes, and all his  
mortifications but counterfeit, and all his tenderness  
but the mother of stupidity, and therefore guard  
against mistakes about your interest in Christ. I in-



treat you. Fifthly consider, that mistakes about interest, is a most abiding and constant mistake; this, believe it, if once we mistake, it is one to a hundred if ever we come right again: this is clear, *Jer. 17. 1.* *They hold fast deceit, they keep it with both their hands.* And *Is. 44. 20.* *There is a lie in their right hand,* is, they hold the lie, and they keep it with all their power; I say if once one be mistaken concerning the interest in Christ, it is hard to put them from it, delusion it is such an abiding thing, that we find Christ speaketh of it, as if it would wait upon one before the judgement seat of Christ, and as if some would not quite their hope of heaven, till Christ pronounce the word, *Depart from me, I know you not,* delusion may carry us over the borders of Time, and lead us to eternity.

Sixthly, There is much counterfeit Religion that in those days, there is a painted faith, there is a painted love, there is a painted mortification, and there is painted tenderness; some they love shadows and figures, and yet they do not love the very shadow of Christ, and are there not many who think they are embracing Christ, and yet are embracing a delusion and fancy.

That which thirdly we would speak to from this point is, to give you some evidences by which ye may know if the assurance ye have of your being in Christ be right or no; believe it, there are many that draw that conclusion, *I am in Christ*, which the devil & their own deceitful heart hath drawn, & Christ never gives consent to it. And I shall propose these seven or eight evidences of real assurance, by which ye may discern.

First, a real assurance is a purifying and sanctifying assurance, that is clear, *1 Joh 3. 3.* *Every man that hath this hope in him, that is, perswaded of this that he shall come to heaven, He will purifie himself as he is pure:* And *2 Cor. 7. 1.* *Having therefore these pro-*

*...s, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. O! When a Christian getteth Christ in his arms, he cannot but cry forth, what have I to do any more with idols? When he hath once gotten Christ in his arms, he will answer every temptation that he meeteth with this, I am not mine own, I am bought with a price, I cannot dispose of my self; and if your assurance of going to heaven be not a purifying assurance, be perswaded of it, it is but the devils pillow sewed under your arm holes. Is it possible a person can be assured of heaven, and not study holiness, can such a delusion as this overtake you.*

Secondly, A real assurance putteth the Christian to a pressing and earnest pursuit after communion & fellowship with God; is it possible for one to be assured, and not to be saying, *he is sick of love*, this is clear, Song 2.16, 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his, and immediatly followeth, Turn thee, O my beloved, and be like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel: And it is clear, Song 7.10, 11. I am my beloveds; and his desire is towards me, and what followeth upon that, She cometh and inviteth Christ; O come down with me to the fields, let us lodge in the villages. O when gave ye Christ such an invitation as this, O precious Christ, let us lodge in the villages, and go down to the secret places of the field, and Psal. 63.1. My God, there is his assurance; and immediatly followeth upon that, Early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth after thee as a dry parched land where no water is. There is a pressing desire after communion. But I would ask you. Are there not many here who have the hope of heaven (to their apprehension) and yet the desire of communion with Christ, was never with them: I desire to say to thee, (be who thou wilt) Be not deceived, God is not mocked, that which thou sowest, thou shalt also reap. I think there are some of us, we would let*

Christ



Christ live in heaven many days without giving one visite, if he would let us alone: But O, if we were within sight of our interest in Christ, how often would this be our complaint, when he were absent; *Thou hast taken away my Lord, and I know not where thou hast laid him; or my idol hath carried me away from him, and I know not where to find him*

Thirdly, Assurance of our being in Christ, will put us to the exercise of praise: believe it, I think this is one of the most searching evidence of assurance: there are some Christians they will be convinced of the neglect of the duty of prayer, but for the neglect of the duty of praise, they never have one conviction: and I tell you the reason of it prayer is a selfish grace (so to speak) but praise it is a denying grace, prayer seeketh, but praise giveth, *Exod. 15. 2. He is my God I will prepare him an habitation, & he is my fathers God I will exalt him. Ps. 118. 28. He is my God I will praise him, he is my God, I will exalt him.* what needed David these repetitions, might not one serve? No saith he, I would even spend my days in this, *My God, my God* there is much of heaven in that word, *My God*, and how committeth many sweet autologies: Now I say to thee was thou ever put to the heart exercise of praise, by this assurance that thou hast, this is an evidence in deed, but alas, many of us cannot say it.

Fourthly, A person that liveth within sight of his interest, Christ is matchless unto him as is clear, *Song. 2. 3. I sat down into his shadow*, there is faith and assurance of it, and what accompanieth that, *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons;* Christ hath not a match, saith the Spouse in his sweetness, his power, his beauty and his usefulness is above all.

Fifthly, Real assurance is a humbling thing, the assurance of a Christian maketh him to sit low in the dust. Was not Jacob low in his own eyes, when he cryed out,

am less then the least of all thy mercies;; What? was not David low in his own eyes, when he spake that word, *What am I, & what is my fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* & was not Paul a low man in his own eyes, Eph. 3:8, 16. *I am less then the least of all thy Saints,* and when he cryed out, *I am the chief of sinners.* The assurance that is real, it will make a Christian to sit down in the dust & cry out, *Wo is me, I am a man of polluted lips.* Sixthly, Real assurance will put to him to take much pleasure and delight in the going about of duties; that word, Psal. 40. 8. *My God, saith he, that is his assurance,* and presently he subjoyneth, *I delight to do thy will, O Lord,* this he speaketh of himself, as himself, and likewise as a type of Christ, Psal. 119. 115. *Depart from me evil doers, I will keep the commandments of my God;* I believe the love of Christ, when it is much in exercise, it will constrain us to our duty, and therefore this proud transporting assurance in these days, that setteth men above all Duties and Ordinances, and maketh them count Gospel, as well as the Law, but beggarly radiments, and cry out to their neighbours, *Stand back, for I am holier then thou;* must needs be a delusion.

Lastly, There are these three properties of a real assurance, it is a begotten assurance, it is a living assurance, and it is a constraining assurance.

The first two properties of it are set down in that, 1 Pet. 1. 2. *He hath begotten us to a lively hope;* who begat that assurance in thee? I suppose some have assurance, and it was begotten without travel; but if Christ be not the father of thy assurance, it will vanish and pass away. And, secondly, it must be a living assurance, some hearts are dead as a stone, and yet they say, they have the hope of heaven. And, thirdly, it must be a constraining assurance, it will put the Christian to do what he commands, yea, if it were the most pleasant if it that we have, if he commandeth us to sacrifice



fice it, we would put a knife to the throat of it, be willing to offer it up

Now after all these evidences, I desire to have report from you concerning your estate; what think ye of your selves, are ye in Christ, or no? I suppose Christ should come here to day, and put us all to the door but these that are in Christ, we would have a thr assembly; I confels, I wonder, that that word doth make us to walk with sadness, *Many are called, but few are chosen*; Now I ask this question at you all, as in the sight of God, as ye will one day answer unto him that will be your judge; what think ye of your selves? Is there none here that can give a present positive answer to this, *Are ye in Christ*, I suppose this, if I went to go round them that are here, and ask, are ye in Christ, *are ye* and *ye in Christ*, O I doubt much if there should be many negative answers within the doors we have so strong a faith some of us, that since we were born, we never doubted of it; But I think (without commending doubting) I may say, the faith that thou never doubted of, is too like a delusion, and the faith that thou never took pains to keep, and yet kepted it self, that is too like a delusion, the faith that never knew what it was to put thee to real seeking of Christ, is too like a delusion. But let me close with this, be your estate what it will, search and come away; I think that is one of the most Gospel invitations that is in all the Scripture, *Lament. 3. 34. Let us search, and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord*; when thou hast searched, come away, for I tell thee this; there will be nothing that will commend thee to Christ so much as necessity, and I hope there is none of you but ye have enough of this; and know it, if ye will not come to Christ, he will compel you to come, but it shall not be for your advantage to stay away, till ye be compelled. O persons that are out of Christ, *Come away*.

persons that are in Christ, *Come away*; we must preach that word, *come away*, unto you, as long as you are here, till ye come and be *fixed as a pillar in the house of God*, and go no more out. O study to be near him! O Christian, didst thou ever think upon this, and say with thy self, O when shall I have immediate imbraces of blessed Christ, when shall there be nothing between my heart and Him? till then, we never get Christ near enough, there is alway something between him and us, till we be above the clouds: O these immediate soul-infoldings and imbracings of Christ: Are ye never sending a messenger to heaven, desiring a pass to go away, that ye may enjoy them, and are ye not longing for the day when the waters of Jordan shall divide themselves, and the ransomed of the Lord shall pass thorow; Now let us sing praises to our King, sing praises, for he hath gone up with a shout, and shall come again, sing praises to our King, sing praises.

### SERMON IX.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine yourselves whether ye be in the Faith? prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.*

**I** Think ere long, there are many that passeth under the notion of professors, that the veriest atheist when he beholdeth their walk, may cry out, *Art thou also become like unto one of us*; Are there not many here that are in a golden dream, & in a fools paradise, that dream they eat, and behold when they awake, they shall be hungry; therefore I think it is incumbent upon us, to search and examine our state and condition; prophanity hath slain its thousands, but delusion & presumption hath their ten thousands. It was an ancient complaint of Christ, Luk. 12. 57. *And why even of your selves judge ye not what is right*: I am perswaded of this, there are many decreets of peace past upon earth, that are



never ratified in heaven, there are many that cry of aff  
*The bitterness of death is past*, whom yet God by of his  
 sword of his justice shall hew in pieces before communi  
 eyes. We told you at the last occasion, that we sp (ther  
 upon these words, there were six things we intend bou m  
 to speak from them; of the first three we have spok comm

That which we intend to speak to at this time, *this de*  
 That there is much soul advantage and spiritual ga media  
 that doth redound to the Christian by the distinct p the fie  
 swasion of his interest in Christ, this we gathered fro of con  
*Pauls* doubling the command of searching and try I am k  
 themselves, as if he had said, it is a business that will mong  
 so much for your advantage, that it is incumbent lee ar  
 you to search and try diligently: And for further upon t  
 clearing of the point, I shall only give these three p have  
 ces, *Rev. 2. 17. I will give unto them a white stone, and will th*  
*the stone a new name written, that no man knoweth, but of an*  
*he that hath received it: By the new name; and the whi try c*  
*stone, is understood assurance, and the intimation of mong*  
 is to the soul: This indeed is such a mercy, that I de ship  
 any to make language of it, no man knoweth it, much of yo  
 less can he express it; but he that is the possessor of aine  
 it, & that place, *Isa. 62. 2, 3. I will give unto them a new nine*  
*name, which the mouth of the Lord will name.* O whi such  
 a name must that be, which the mouth of the Lor O bu  
 will name? I think what he giveth must be one of the porta  
 noblest names that ever was given, all the stiles and uran  
 titles under heaven cannot equal it. And thirdly, *ides*  
 see *David*, in the 18. *Psalms*, found much sweetne pho  
 and advantage in this, when nine times he hath the p sen  
 word, *My strength, my rock, my fortress and deliverer, m*  
*strength and my buckler, the horn of my salvation, and m*  
*high tower, O David, what needeth all these Mys, Da*  
*vid, would answer us, O! he is so sweet in himself, but*  
 O! much sweeter to me, when I put to that possessi NO  
 note, *My.* f er  
 hri

Now to speak more particularly to these advantages

of assurance, The first is, that a person that is assured of his interest in Christ, he is much in desiring communion with Christ. Tell me, *O thou whom my soul loveth*; (there is his assurance) *where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon*, there is desire of communion, and Song 7.10, 11. *My beloved is mine, & his desire is towards me*, there is her assurance, and immediately followeth, *Come my beloved, let us go forth into the fields, let us lodge in the villages*, there her desiring of communion, Song 2.16, 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, and what followeth upon that, *He feedeth among the lillies, until the day break and the shadows flee away, Turn my beloved, and be as a roe, or a wild hart upon the mountains of Bether*, that is in short, let me have sweet correspondency and fellowship with thee, till the day of eternitie shall come. I think the desires of an assured Christian, they are like the grave, they cry continually *Give, give, and they never say it is enough*, what is the reason ye seek to be nearer fellowship with Christ, it is even this, ye are not perswaded of your interest in him; believe it, if once ye had attained to this blessed length, as to cry out, *Christ is mine*, it would be a hell upon earth for you to live at such a distance with him as you do for the most part; but assurance maketh absence from Christ an unsupportable burden, Ps. 22. 1. *My God, my God*, there is assurance, & immediately followeth this complaint, *why hidest thou thy self from me*, Song 3. 1, 2, 3. that word, *Him whom my soul loveth*, made her to weep so much under absence from Christ, & Jo. 20. 13. when the Angels ask the question at Mary, *Woman why weepest thou?* I think she thought it a needless question, and she tells the cause of it, *They have taken away my Lord*, I think her heart was at her mouth, when she pronounced these two words, *My Lord*, she spake them with a great deal of emphasis and force, could ye relent absence with Christ so little, if ye were assured he were yours. I confess,



fess, it is no wonder when persons lose that which is not their own, that they weep not much for the loss of it: but oh! to lose that which is our own, it maketh it a cross and a burden to us.

Secondly, It maketh the soul to have a high matchless esteem of precious Christ, Song 5. 10. *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand.* O saith the Spouse, I never saw his like, and I shall never see his like again; there is much in that *My*; it rest maketh her look upon Christ with another eye, nor she would have done, strangers look upon Christ but as a tree planted on the sand, 1 Pet. 2. 7. *To you that believe Christ is precious, not every one;* And Song 2. 3. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight, the fruit of the tree is interest in the words going before, As the tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons;* yea assurance will make every thing in Christ exceeding pleasant to the soul, as is clear, Song 5. 1. *My beloved is altogether lovely, or he is all desires.* I say you what assurance will do, it will make Christ's person pleasant & precious to the soul, it will make Christ's Natures pleasant to the soul, it will make Christ's Offices pleasant to the soul, and it will make Christ's Promises pleasant to the soul, it will make threatnings pleasant to the soul, it will make the smell of Christ's garments pleasant to the soul, and it will make the sweetness of his mouth pleasant to the soul: O saith the assured Christian, there is nothing of Christ but it is most pleasant, and is all desires; His threatnings are pleasant, they are the wounds of a friend, and His kisses are pleasant, they are better then wine, His Name is pleasant, it is as precious ointment poured forth, His smillings are most delightful, *whose countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars:* O to imbrace a married Christ, how pleasant is it to the soul; What maketh you to have so low thoughts of Christ? even the want of assurance that He is your Husband.

Thirdly, Assurance wil make the Christian path

to submit to every cross and sad dispensation he  
 re-ereth with: this is clear, *Heb. 10. 34. They took with joy  
 the spoiling of their goods, and what made them do so,  
 they hoped for a better inheritance, and a more enduring  
 substance: I tell you, assurance, it will answer all crosses  
 with this, Christ is mine, when they are afflicted, assu-  
 rance will lift up its face and cry out, Christ is mine, and  
 when they are reproached, they will comfort them-  
 selves with this, Christ is mine, I can put on the Lord Jesus.*

Fourthly, Assurance will keep you from Apostacy,  
 and defection from Christ, *2 Pet. 1. 10. Make your call-  
 ing and election sure, and if ye do this (saith he) ye shall  
 never fall, Heb. 3. 11, 12. It is there set down as a fruit  
 of the evil heart of misbelief, it maketh us depart from  
 the living God, but on the contrary, assurance knitteth  
 the soul to Christ by a threefold cord which is not ea-  
 sily broken. Believe it, the assured Christian can cry  
 out with much confidence of faith, My Mountain stand-  
 eth strong, I shall never be moved, the assured Christian  
 can cry out with much chearfulness: In God will I praise  
 his word, in God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid  
 what flesh can do unto me; yea, he can sweetly sing in the  
 very mouth of danger, The Lord is my light and my sal-  
 vation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my  
 life, of whom shall I be afraid, Psal. 27. 1.*

Fifthly, assurance keepeth all the graces of the spirit  
 green and flourishing, it is as a refreshing dew upon  
 our branches which maketh every grace sweetly to  
 blossom in its season, 1. It stireth up the exercise of  
 love, O how vigorous are the actings of love, when a  
 Christian can cry out, *My beloved is mine and I am his,*  
*Song 1. 13. My beloved, there is her assurance, He is a  
 bundle of myrrhe, and shall lie all night between my breasts,  
 that is as long as time shall last, I shall never have Christ  
 out of my heart, there is love, 1 Joh. 4. 19. We loved him,  
 because he loved us first; our hearts are naturally cold,  
 but love kindleth love, the sense of his love to us, put-  
 teth*



teth our hearts into a heavenly flame towards him to gain. 2. Assurance keeps up the exercise of prayer, the assured Christian that can pray best, & to be at advantage and in these three things especially is helped by assurance; 1. It helpeth in the point of necessity, O but the assured Christian can go boldly to the throne of grace, crying, *Abba father, and my Lord, and my God.* 2. It helpeth our diligence in prayer, *Pf. 63. my God, there is assurance, early will I seek thee,* & is his diligence as the fruit thereof. 3. It helpeth fervency of prayer, as in that same place, *My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,* there is his fervency as another fruit of his assurance. 4. Assurance keeps in exercise and life, the grace of mortification, clear, by comparing 2 Cor. 4. verse last, with 2 Cor. 5. *We look not after the things that are seen, O Paul, saileth you,* may ye not take a look of the world? *saith Paul, and would you know the ground of it? know ye this house of this tabernacle were dissolved, I have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, my house and my treasure is in heaven, I must leave my heart there, and my eyes also; would you know what would stay your pursuit after the world, would you to have the assurance of your interest in Christ continually with you. And, 5. It keepeth in exercise the grace of humility: there is nothing will keep Christians so humble as assurance, Gal. 2. 20. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,* Eph. 3. 8. *there he is all in all, alting grace and debasing himself.* It is the misbelief and discouraged person, that dwelleth nearest pride, believe it, misbelief is big with child of pride and apostacy, these are the two children which that fruitful mother will bring forth. And, 6. It will help the grace of repentance: would ye know what will make the Christian to repent, it is even this, to have Christ in our arms and call him ours, Zech. 12. *They shall look unto him, that is their faith: and they**

urn, as one mourneth for his only son ; I think it is  
 down by experience; the soul never weeps more ten-  
 derly under the conviction of sin, then when he hath  
 Christ in his arms, and can say, *He is mine* : O how  
 sweetly do they then complain; there is not a sight of  
 Christ as their own, when they have offended, but it  
 breaks all their heart in pieces, and it is a sword pier-  
 cing into the bones when they cry out, O what a fool  
 as I to offend such a precious One, in whom I had  
 much interest? was it not sense of interest that made  
 Mary wash the feet of Christ with her tears? Lastly,  
 will keep in exercise the grace of joy, 1 Pet. i. 8.  
 is faith which maketh one to *rejoyce with joy unspeak-  
 able and full of glory*; Would ye know why your graces  
 are withered? Would ye know why all the pleasant  
 plants of God within your soul are decayed? it is this,  
 to live without sight of your interest in Christ; believe  
 (if so I may speak) assurance will be a watering to  
 your graces every morning, and refresh them every  
 hour, it being as a channel through which divine in-  
 fluences is conveyed to the increase of grace, and  
 specially of joy.

The sixth advantage that cometh into the Christi-  
 an by assurance of his interest in Christ, is, That it  
 maketh death exceeding pleasant and comfortable to  
 the soul; What maketh death *the king of terrors*, and  
 what maketh it so unto us? Is it not this, we go to  
 heaven under a cloud? the assured Christian can take  
 death in his arms and cry out, welcome, *O friend*; the  
 assured Christian when he seeth the chariot, his father  
 waits for him, doth with old Jacob rejoyce, and Psal.  
 138. *When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death  
 will fear no evil*: What brought you that length, Da-  
 vid? I tel you why, faith he *for God is with me, verse  
 10*. I think I need not fear any thing, when I have  
 God in my company; it is the assured Christian that  
 can cry out, *Why should I fear death*? Should I not laugh  
 at



at destruction? I think indeed, the assured Christian needeth not fear death, because death to him is the death of all his lusts, the funeral of all his sorrows and is not the day of death his coronation-day, his marriage-day, the day of his triumph and his entering into rest, and why then should he fear it? The seventh advantage is, that a Christian being in the state of assurance, can put the highest account upon the smallest mercy that he meets with from God: the assured Christian looketh upon every mercy as a wonder, it is the assured Christian that cryeth out, *I am less than the least of all thy mercies*: there is not a mercy he meets with, were it but a drop of cold water, but if he can read this on it, that it came from my husband, and from my father, it will be better to him than the sweetest wine.

Lastly, assurance doth exceedingly help us to cheerfulness in obedience, O that is a remarkable connection that Paul hath, *Act. 27. 37. The Lord whose I am and whom I serve*; that passage also, *2 Cor. 5. 14. is very observable, The love of Christ constraineth us, &c.* Why art thou so painful a minister Paul? why knowest thou no man after the flesh, are not led by carnal interests, no affections: are so busie and diligent, as all the world counteth thee mad? Why? (saith he) love will not let me rest, if I would be lazie or carnal, or fold my hands to sleep; the love of Christ doth always sound that in my ears, that I was dead, and he hath died for me, that henceforth I should not live unto my self, but unto him that died for me; *Now to him who is the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive for evermore, We give praise.*

F I N I S.

